UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A SOCIO-HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE AGED IN BRIGUS NEWFOUNDLAND, 1920-1949

BY

ROBERT MUNRO LEWIS ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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PREFACE

Every Master who brings a Servant or Fisherman from England has a right to retain Forty Shillings of his wages to enable him to return to England. This Law was made for the purpose of preventing emigration to America, to enforce the return of Fishermen to Europe to their Wives and Familys, and lastly, and particularly, to prevent Fishermen from wintering in Newfoundland. This, at first sight, appears singular, and its extraordinaryness ariseth from the supposition that the Residence of so usefull a people will hurt the public weal. I must say that in Newfoundland a Work House does not exist and Poor Rates are as great strangers as fertile fields and Cinnamon Groves. The Motto which is riveted on the minds of all Housekeepers here is that He who will not work shall not eat. This axiom is undoubtedly a good one and is more prevalent in America then in Europe. In Newfoundland a lazy man is consider'd by Inhabitants in the same light as Bees do a Drone, where everyone assists in expelling him from the Hive. In this Land there is no Public Charity for the Sick and the Lame; even the Blind and Aged can have no assistance but what comes from the hands of Private Individuals. The Fisherman which Chance has left behind must be supported all Winter at the expense of the Master whom he serv'd during the Summer. It was his province to see that the Fisherman was sent Home at the close of the Fishing Season. (Thomas, 1968 [written 1794-95], pp. 171-172)

Where anyone, man or woman, having reached an advanced age ... where they have become dependent on charity ... it is the duty of the State to come forward to their support." (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1926, p. 980)

ABSTRACT

Newfoundland in the period 1920-1949 has been characterized by both gerontological- and Newfoundland-modernization theorists as a 'traditional' society, within which the 'patrilocal, patricentric extended family'—the primary site of production, reproduction, and consumption—has been assumed to be the normal household situation of the aged.

The community of Brigus—a rural Newfoundland community (population c. 1,000) whose most important economic activity was the Labrador codfishery—was studied to test this. An examination of the nominal census records, historical documents, and oral historical sources indicates that Brigus was not characterized by 'patrilocal, patricentric extended households' nor were they the household situation of significant numbers of the elderly. Instead Brigus was marked by neolocal residence, the predominance of the nuclear family as the basic domestic group, and little evidence of household production. Independent residence among the aged was preferred though some elderly did live with children and grandchildren, in later old age. The prevalence of nuclear family residence among the aged was closely linked to the existence of collective institutions of social support ('Widows' Pension, Old Age Pension, and relief).

The historical bases of this household situation and those collective institutions are found in Newfoundland society's origins in late the sixteenth century capitalist expansion of the North Atlantic economy. Until the foundation of settled society, Newfoundland was an incomplete society, an extension of shipboard society and a workplace—a site of production but not social reproduction. For the aged, Newfoundland was a place of production and sometimes of year-round residence but almost never a place of life-long residence. Lacking both year-round employment and institutions for public support the dependent at Newfoundland returned to Britain for support.

The establishment of 'settled society', founded on the development of a capitalistically organized seal fishery, in the early nineteenth century saw the establishment of the institutions of settled society. Because of the strongly democratic character of the Newfoundland state, the institutions of public support reflected popular traditions and the English Old Poor Laws. However, the political-economic basis of those institutions was fundamentally different from those found in Britain.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The study has three main goals: 1) to examine the situation of the aged in Brigus during the period from 1920-1949; 2) to attempt to explain that situation historically, as part of a work dealing with the history of the aged in Newfoundland; and, 3) to compare the results of the study with the claims of the dominant existent theories within social gerontology generally, and with other studies of the elderly in traditional Newfoundland society.

One of the central concerns of historical gerontology is how, where, and with whom the elderly members of a society lived. These questions have been considered almost exclusively within the context of what sociologists refer to as *modernization theory*. As *modernization theory* within social gerontology has generally developed independently of the wider modernization literature a more appropriate label is *gerontological modernization theory* which will be used in this study.

Gerontological modernization theory (hereafter referred to as GMT) first arose, at least explicitly, in the 1950s, to explain changes in the status and condition of the aged within the paradigm of modernization. However, GMT soon became itself a paradigm. While modernization theory in its classic form may have declined as a central organizing paradigm in many other areas of sociology, GMT continues to be the central organizing concept in social gerontology, despite criticism from some sources (Laslett, 1984; D. S. Smith, 1993).

The essence of GMT is that, in *traditional* societies, the elderly were supported materially and socially by their extended families, as well as physically within the extended family/household. According to GMT, a radical change occurs in modern societies, the elderly being isolated from their extended families due to the new norm of neolocal residence on marriage. Furthermore, in modern societies the material and social support of the aged comes from the state and other collective institutions, and is qualitatively inferior to that which the aged received from their families in traditional society. Modern societies have also demonstrated an increasing use of specific and explicit age norms (Kertzer, 1995, p. 365).

One of the reasons that GMT has remained as a central organizing paradigm in the study of the aged is that it also functions outside of a purely intellectual context. As Thomson (1991, pp. 194-195) has argued:

> In the last decades of this century a fundamental social debate is mounting across a wide range of modern societies. The welfare rights and responsibilities of individuals, their families, and the wider community are being reassessed as they have not been for forty years at least, and some major shifts in social policy seem likely. What direction and pace these will adopt is not yet certain, but the major protagonists are already identifiable. The battle will have on the one side those who press for greater individual responsibility and less collective action in welfare matters, and on the other the defenders of the status quo.... The renewed welfare debates of the 1970s and 1980s have revealed the poverty of a scholarship which has allowed itself to be captured by 'the rise of the Welfare State'. The historiography of social policy has been and remains excessively Whiggish, and no sustained question of this has yet developed. According to the still-dominant view the modern welfare state stands as the pinnacle of an evolutionary path along which all societies are moving. Our self-chosen task as historians has been to retell in reassuring tones a familiar narrative of progress and achievement. Whether we write of Britain or any other modern society, we record the same unique shift, occurring during the last 100 years, by which 'traditional' societies have given way to 'modern' ones.
>
> This transition has meant at root a vital relocation of the balance of responsibilities. In traditional societies, so the assumption goes, the needy look to their own resources, or to those of family and kin. They may receive some outside assistance, but they have little expectation of it, and certainly no sense of a right to help from the wider community. By contrast, modern populations are marked by the apparent lack of responsibility which individuals and families feel for their own well-being, and the readiness with which they expect and demand services from the community at large.

This debate is taking place in many parts of the world, including Canada (e.g., Andorka, 1995; Kertzer, 1995). This "narrative of progress"—in which the elderly go from living with and being dependent on the extended family to a modern one in which the elderly live on their own and are ultimately dependent on the state for their support—can have a number of ideological functions. It can serve as a critique of capitalism or a justification for the growth of the 'Welfare State'. However, conservative politicians often use the decline in extended family ties and inter-generational activity as ideological justification for dismantling the 'Welfare State', cutting back government social support systems, and returning the responsibility for the aged to their families. For example, Cain (1982) argues that in Canada:

> One alternative to muddling through [i.e., with government support for the aged] might be to develop a policy to *revitalize* the kinship role in supporting the elderly; to, for example, socialize the young to respect their parents and grandparents, to provide material and other incentives for relatives to support their old kin, to emphasize maintenance of ethnic and sectarian identities so that covenant-type relationships may be preserved through the generations. (p. 83, emphasis added)

For Newfoundland it has often been argued that the transition from a *traditional* society occurred more recently than elsewhere in North America. For Newfoundland it has generally been accepted[1] that the "unique shift ... by which 'traditional' societies have given way to 'modern' ones" (Thomson, 1991, p.195) began within the past fifty years, i.e., since Confederation with Canada.

An important aspect of the Newfoundland modernization paradigm is the argument that government support of the aged, as with other forms of government support, is something which arose following Confederation with Canada. It has been argued that government social support of the aged and other 'dependent' groups was essentially foreign to 'traditional' Newfoundland, and that it served to dissolve that society, by replacing kinship supports with impersonal collective ones, while simultaneously holding back the development of freemarket capitalism (Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, 1986, especially p. 46). This argument has been used to defend government cutbacks and the privatization of the public welfare system.

---

[1] Though, I would argue, without adequate evidence. However, to fully deal with that is well beyond the scope of this thesis.

The present study will attempt to show that neither GMT nor Newfoundland modernization theory adequately describe the situation of the aged in Brigus, and to a greater or lesser extent the rest of Newfoundland, in the period from 1920-1949. It will be further argued that an examination of the situation of the aged in Brigus and Newfoundland in this period and of the historical origins of that situation serve as yet another negative test case for GMT while calling into question at least some of the common characterizations of 'traditional' Newfoundland society.

I. Review of the Literature on the Aged

The characterization of a societal development in which there was a *traditional* past within which the elderly were revered as opposed to a present in which the elderly are either ignored of despised has continued to infuse much of the recent social scientific literature on the aged:

> Gerontocracies seem to be the norm in traditional, preliterate folk societies. Urbanization, industrialization, and increased mobility may have been among the elements reducing the significance of gerontocracies and lowering the regard for old age. (Miranda & Morales, 1992, p. 398)

> The MDC's [more developed countries] with their universal old age pension plans, social programs and medicare have may complex economic problems facing them. The LDC's [less developed countries], on the other hand, are unable to aid their elderly in a meaningful manner and are dependent on the great social institution, the family, for the care of these people who are store houses of experience and wisdom. The developed countries can learn a lot from the developing countries.... (Krishnan & Mahadevan, 1992, p. vii)

A conception of human development characterized by essential historical dichotomies has infused social theory since at least the eighteenth century. Where age and the aged are dealt with it is most often in terms of those dichotomies. Remarkably similar characterizations to those cited above can be found in the foundational works of the social sciences. Adam Smith (1937), in *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, observed that in societies without any other form of rank and precedence age was the only mark of status, whereas, in societies with more differentiated social structure age was only important when all other personal characteristics were the same. Durkheim (1964) contrasted traditional societies in which tradition supports the authority of old age and *vice versa* with modern societies in which the old lose status and authority because of the decline of the importance of tradition as a source of authority. Weber (1968) made similar observations:

> In all communities which orient their social conduct toward tradition, i.e., toward convention, customary law or sacred law, the elders are, so to speak, the natural *honoratiores* not only because of their prestige of wider experience, but also because they know the traditions.... (1968, p. 950)

The common theme of these early social theorists was that the decline in status of the aged was linked to increasing social and technical complexity [illegible] essential feature of modern societies.

A. Early Work on the Status of the Aged

All of the social sciences have a long tradition of conceptualizing the development of society as a 'great transformation' from *natural* to *constructed* communities. At the most general evolutionary level this is seen in the basic division between those societies said to be organized on the basis of *mechanical solidarity, gemeinschaft, status*, or *community*, and those said to be organized on the basis of *organic solidarity, gesellschaft, contract*, or *society association*. The conceptualization takes on a spatial dimension in the division between rural and urban societies, with the former representing *natural, traditional* societies. Characterizations of such a great transformation continue to this day; Coleman describes a great transformation initiated by the French and Industrial revolutions, as the:

> ... decline of primordial institutions based on the family as the central element of social organization and the replacement of these institutions by purposively constructed organization. (1993, p. 1)

Among theorists of the family this transformation takes the form of the growth of individualism in the family and the loss of the family's basic social functions (e.g., Ogburn, 1923; Parsons, 1965; Zimmerman, 1947). Most theorists of the family make at least passing reference to the condition of the aged. The link between studies of the family and of old age has been made primarily in terms of the question of residency. Whether or not the elderly lived with their children and grandchildren within extended families is often presented as pivotal to the status and condition of the elderly (Matras, 1990). The spatial dimensions characteristic of the more general evolutionary theories are accepted by those theorists of the family. Rural areas are presented as representative of *traditional*, family-centred societies:

> Historically, rural people have been exceptionally family-oriented.... The extended family, therefore, was an important part of rural life, and there was usually some meaningful work that could be done by people of all ages—even those with physical and intellectual handicaps. Rural culture was family-centred. (Sheafor & Lewis, 1992, p. 423)

B. Gerontological Modernization Theory

Gerontological modernization theory served and continues to serve as the default formulation for the social history of aging (e.g., Rosenmayr, 1987). While Burgess and Cowgill have generally been credited with formulating the theory or the observation that there is a "temporal correlation [positive] between modernization and the reduction in status of the aged" (Cowgill, 1974, p. 16), GMT actually goes back further. Progressive social reformers at the beginning of the century, in arguing for public old age pensions, correlated urbanization and industrialization with a perceived decline in the social and economic position of the elderly, presaging a number of Cowgill's observations on the decline of the aged in the process of modernization. In 1913 Isaac Rubinow proclaimed that, "The socio-economic problem of the old man or woman .... is specifically a problem of modern society, a result of the rapid industrialization within the last century." (quoted in, Haber, 1993, p. 97).

Later, the anthropologist Linton (1942) also prefigured a number of Cowgill's observations on the decline of the aged in the process of modernization (or the decline of *traditional* societies) Linton was clearly addressing a pre-existing argument that the aged were more honoured in traditional societies. In 1950 T. Lynn Smith (1950), in a chapter on the aged in rural society, linked the decline in the status of the aged with urbanization.

Gerontological modernization theory has, in its essentially evolutionary theory of aging, posits three hypotheses concerning the position of the aged in societies undergoing modernization: One, that *the* transformation which is taking place or has recently taken place in societies passing from *traditional* to *modern*, which is synonymous with the shift from rural/agricultural to urban/industrial societies, has certain similar general, evolutionary, characteristics. Two, as all societies which are in the process of *modernizing* pass through the same general stages, observation of present-day *modernizing* societies allows us to observe in them a mirror of the transformation which took place in Western societies sometime in the past. Three, the particular differences between different societies at the same stage along the evolutionary path are idiosyncratic features, ultimately due to chance, and, in any case, of minor import. In other words, important changes in the position of the aged are evolutionary rather than historical in nature. Clearly, human agency is not a central aspect of these hypotheses, and, more importantly for this study, the history of old age is essentially a peripheral issue to the more central topics of social and economic modernization.

The first explicit exposition of GMT was done by Burgess (1960), however, there is no real account of *traditional* societies nor the actual status of the aged in his work. For Burgess, traditional societies serve mostly as a foil for modern ones. The real development of GMT can be found in the works of Cowgill (1974; 1981; 1972). Despite some modifications concerning the varieties of *traditional* societies, the theory has remained essentially unchanged in its basic appraisal of the changes in the status of the aged. Cowgill (1981) sees a decline in the status of the aged with the shift from traditional, rural societies, specifically from "advanced agricultural societies" (p. 26), to modern, urbanized industrial ones. Cowgill sees four main causes for this decline:

1) Improved health technology: Improvements in health technology leads to an increase in the numbers of old and very old people in modern societies. The elderly were rare in traditional societies and prized as such. The increase in the number of the aged leads to conflicts between generations over jobs as a larger percentage of jobs are blocked by the increased population of the elderly. Older people are removed from jobs through some system of forced retirement and there is a corresponding decrease in the status of the aged in a society which increasingly equates social status with job status.
2) Changes in economic technology flowing out of industrialization: These changes result in two things: a devaluation of the skills held by the elderly; and a separation of work from the home. Both have a negative impact on the elderly.
3) Urbanization, in itself: As the young migrate to cities, the extended family of traditional rural societies is replaced by the modern nuclear family. This results in the avoidance of the responsibility of support for aged parents by their children, and further separating the young and the aged. State intervention in support for the elderly, in response to disruptions caused by urbanization, in turn serves to increase the breakup of traditional support for the aged.
4) Education: The rise in literacy displaces the traditional role of elders as the primary repository of knowledge. In fact, in most modern societies it is the young who become the holders of the most valuable, i.e., most modern, information.

(Summarized from Cowgill, 1981, pp. 23-26)

An immediate contradiction which exists in Cowgill's formulation. Cowgill characterizes the "advanced agricultural societies" in which the status of the aged is said to be the highest as being marked by, "a simple rural life dependent upon muscle power with *undifferentiated institutions* and a traditional outlook" (Cowgill, 1981, p. 26), yet the dominant characteristic of all these societies, e.g., feudal Europe, pre-Revolutionary Russia and China, or feudal Japan, is that they were highly stratified class societies, very much marked by differentiated (by class or estate) institutions. Further, these societies were not static in the sense assumed by GMT. The early stages of the 'industrial revolution' in Europe were more a rural phenomenon than an urban one, the outcome of radical changes in land tenure, agricultural technology, and production which had been taking place from at least the mid-fourteenth century. This in turn points to another problem, the simple dichotomy of traditional, rural relations of production versus industrial, urban relations of production simply does not apply to the original areas of industrialization.

Another problem is that what exactly is indicated by 'the status of the aged' is unclear. At times it appears to refer to the economic and social power of the aged, something like age as a class, e.g., in the supposed displacement of the aged from their former employments by the process of industrialization; elsewhere, it seems to mean social status, e.g., in the discussion of the relationship between the decrease in social status of the aged with the increase in their numbers. In either case Cowgill seems to be making the assumption that there is an relatively uncomplicated relationship between the social status of the aged and the socio-economic situation of the aged.

While GMT has been criticized both on a substantive level—as a description of what happened to the aged over the last few centuries—and on a more theoretical level—that it is really more of an evolutionary than an historical theory—it truly is, in Laslett's terms (1976), the "informal existent dogmatic theory". Because the history of the aged has been so little studied in most areas of the world, some form of a critique of GMT, either of its general statements or of its timing and causes, has been the *leitmotif* of the history of the aged. As Kertzer points out in a recent review of the field:

> It would be naïve to claim that these stereotypes [i.e., 'existent dogmatic theory'] act only as a hindrance to scholarly study, since few historians can resist the allure of identifying a broadly accepted stereotype that they can, through historical study, show to be false. The recent history of old age

> has, indeed, largely been written as just such a series of attempts at myth slaying.... (1995, p. 363)

Gerontological modernization theory has been more than just the "informal existent dogmatic theory" among social scientists and historians interested in the aged. As demonstrated in the passages from Adam Smith, Durkheim, and Weber in the foregoing pages and as recognized by Laslett, some form of GMT is a recurrent theme in, at least, the Western European tradition[2], a theme which continues to inform fundamental social/political debates about the constitution of society. In Newfoundland any historical work on the aged is inevitably a test of the existent theory, due to the dearth of previous historical studies on the aged. That the "informal existent dogmatic theory" may have been disproved for England does not make it less the default formulation for Newfoundland.

C. Historical critiques

The initial historical work on the aged was undertaken as an explicit critique of the gerontological modernization paradigm. Critiques of GMT, from the historically oriented theoretical perspective, can be divided in two schools. The first, represented by Achenbaum (1974; 1978), Cole (1992), Demos (1978), Fischer (1978), Haber (1978; 1983), Haber and Gratton (1987, though they move away from this in their later works), S. S. Smith (1984d), S. R. Smith (1984c), and Stearns (1980a; 1980b; 1981), find the cause of the change in the status of the aged in changes in the ideology of old age, with ideology being both the symptom of and the driving force behind those changes.[3] The second, represented by Anderson (1972; 1977), Braun (1966), Chudacoff and Hareven (1978),

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[2] Perhaps part of the reason for the persistence of the picture drawn of status of the aged by GMT lies in the projection of difference in the relationship of individuals, often fuzzily remembered and idealized, in their youth with their grandparents and the more immediate and less idealized relationship of middle^aged adults with their aged parents.

[3] Troyansky (1996, pp.@233^236), following Cole (1992), refers to this as the "cultural approach". I would argue that restricting culture to ideology and the intellectual is an overly restrictive conception of culture.

Dowd (1981), Haber and Gratton (1994, departing from their earlier work}, (Kertzer, 1995), Kohli, Rosenow, and Wolf (1983), Myles (1984), Laslett (1984; 1988; 1994), Quadagno (1982; 1984a; 1984b), and D. S. Smith (1995), find the cause of the change, or the lack thereof, in the status of the aged in the socio-economic situation of the aged and in certain changes in material/social structural conditions, e.g., modes of production or demography. They are, at least implicitly, dubious of the causal impact or at least the central importance of the ideological status of the aged to their socio-economic status. In effect, the two perspectives have each taken issue with part of the relationship between the socio-economic situation of the aged and the social status of the aged which GMT treats as unproblematic.

1. Historical-Ideological Approaches to the Status of the Aged

The initial historical studies of Euro-North American elderly were undertaken in the United States by Fischer (1978), Achenbaum (1978), and Haber (1983) were primarily concerned with the ideology of old age and the status of the aged. All three authors are in essential agreement with GMT that there actually has been a decline in the status of the aged and, at least implicitly, in the condition of the aged. They all argue that the decline was not linked, at least directly, with industrialization and urbanization, which Cowgill saw as central, but rather was linked with certain changes in the "perceptions of older persons' relative value" (Achenbaum, 1978, p. 11). While they are in general agreement on the reality of decline, they disagree on the period, the trajectory, and the specifics of the causation of the decline. Each of these authors concentrated their research on different periods of American history and each found the watershed period of change in the status of the elderly toward the end of the period in which they had focussed their research.

Fischer (1978) focussed his research, or at least his primary research, on colonial New England and on the period of the early republic, while Achenbaum (1978) on the period from 1790 to circa 1930, and Haber (1983) concentrated on the period from the latter half of the nineteenth century to the First World War. However, the latter two authors compare the period of their studies with an earlier period (with the exception of Fischer) and with the present.

Despite overlapping time periods and use of many of the same sources, each writer comes up with very different timetable for the decline of the status of the aged. For Fischer (1978) colonial America was marked by "the exaltation of age" (p. 26), while the status of the aged declined fairly dramatically after the American Revolution, as a direct result of changes in general ideas about the individual and individual rights. Achenbaum (1978) found the marked decline in the status of aged to have occurred later, after 1860; ultimately due to changes in general ideas about the worth of the aged. Haber (1983) found no single period of rapid decline but instead finds a pattern of gradual decline in the status of the aged from the colonial period up through the recent past (i.e., circa 1940-1970), a function of changes in ideas about the aged which were spread primarily by a small elite group of professionals.

The fact that all three researchers found a decline in the status of the aged in differing time periods, despite starting with similar views of the status of the aged in modern society, points to the first problem common to all of these works. While these studies are inherently comparisons of the condition of the elderly in the past with the purported condition of the elderly at *present*, none give any original evidence that the status of the elderly is particularly low in modern America, beyond the gerontological truisms found "in the most frequently cited works in gerontology and geriatrics published since 1935 ... and upon insights derived by reading retrospective articles on the 'state of the field'" (Achenbaum, 1978, p. 177). In effect all studies presume that:

> Old age in mid-twentieth-century America, is a stage of life both clearly and categorically defined. The man and woman who reach sixty-five seemingly undergo a dramatic change.... Age, more than any other criterion, sets the elderly apart from society... The active, as well as the sedentary, the

> healthy and the disabled are all perceived as superannuated. (Haber, 1983, p. 1)

Yet as some of these same "retrospective articles on the 'state of the field'" point out that we "know very little about the way in which age criteria actually operate alongside other criteria in determining social rank" (Neugarten & Hagestad, 1976, p. 37).

Even though it is not explicitly stated, the *decline* in the status of the aged is understood to be a decline in status relative to the status of some or all other age groups. However, these studies do not make consistent comparisons of the condition of the elderly of the past with the condition of the non-elderly of the past, and as a result they do not examine whether the relation of agedness to status at present might be a spurious one. Considering the centrality of the division between age effects and cohort effects—the confounding of which is the origin of the spuriousness—in social gerontology, this oversight is surprising. For example, Fischer (1978), Achenbaum (1978), and Haber (1983) all give evidence of a rise in the *unemployment rate* (though the exact measurement of this varies) for workers over sixty-five in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries;[4] yet none give the comparable figures for other age groups, nor do they control for other variables such as those of occupation (i.e., were the aged simply more likely to be employed in declining occupations?) or education (i.e., were the aged less employed as a result of being less educated?).

A *theoretical* problem which has immediate methodological consequences for all of these studies is that they presume that old age is a universally recognized and important social grouping and, more importantly, that it was so in the periods under investigation. As a result, there is the assumption that where the aged are dealt with in the historical record their agedness, as an important status-conferring characteristic (be it positive or negative), will inevitably be mentioned. Therefore, for example, Achenbaum (1978) describes going through the historical record looking for overt references to old age in the titles, tables of contents, and indexes of contemporaneous works and then examining those works in more detail. The problem is that this method of selection inevitably chooses those historical references which highlight the separate status of the age over those which do not, i.e., those references which treat the aged equal and as undifferentiated members of society.[5]

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[4] Though what percentage were due to actual disabilities or unforced choice is not given.

Evidence for this systematic bias can be found in the results of some of the more quantitative studies of the same literature; in particular *Littell's Living Age* (a popular nineteenth century magazine), which both Fischer (1978) and Achenbaum (1978) used in their research. Fischer claims to have found a pattern of disengagement and marginalization of the aged in this and similar magazines from at least 1850 on, while Achenbaum claims that the decline of the status of the aged is to be found in this type of literature from circa 1860. Range and Vinovskis (1981) on the other hand, in a content analysis of a random sample of fiction from *Littell's Living Age* for the years 1845-1882, "...found that the elderly ... were portrayed as remarkably healthy, sane, and economically independent of their children or society" (p. 155-57) throughout the period under study.

Another common theoretical problem is that *status* is never explicitly defined. At times the status of the aged is taken as *prestige* (i.e., do people say nice things about them) and sometimes as *power*, economic, cultural, or political (although this last aspect is given only minimal coverage). Fischer (1978) presents a number of things which he presents as evidence for the exaltation of old age in colonial New England, for example: that "Witchcraft was commonly associated with old age" (p. 34)—presumably indicative of cultural-symbolic power; admonitions against acting younger than one's age (p. 36)—presumably indicative of *prestige* proper; the ability (come necessity) of aged parents to continue to economically exploit their children (pp. 52-58)—presumably indicative of economic power. Without an explicit formulation of the nature of and evidence for social status each the examples from Fischer can be viewed as equally good evidence either for or against high status. Feminist scholars have, of course, seen accusations of witchcraft as indicative of the lack of *power* (or at least of official and sanctified power) and status of women. Sumptuary laws were always directed against those who would, in their apparel, etc., present themselves as above their station. The fact that the aged would find it necessary to keep control of land (or to draw up written contracts making the nature of support explicit) in order to keep respect (Fischer, 1978, pp. 52-58) suggests that the exaltation of old age was not the *norm* (either in the sense of norm as a statistical regularity or as a societal moral proscription).

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[5] While the same argument might be made against those studies of the aged which primarily employ more *objectivist* data, in particular running records of births and deaths, censuses, political enumerations, etc., the routinized and fairly consistent enumeration of ages (or sex, religion, and income) would seem to limit this source of bias, or at least keep it consistent.

Closely related to this lack of definition of *status* in reference to the aged is the common problem that there is no explicit link made between the theoretical statement of the relationship of the evidence presented and the theory being proposed. In particular, the relation between the pronouncements of past experts about what the elderly should and did do and the lived condition of the elderly is left untheorized. In fact, though Achenbaum (1978) tends to be an exception to this, there is no separation between proscriptive and descriptive writings on the aged. Fischer (1978) makes this theoretical *lacuna* explicit when he rejects court records, one of the standard sources of non-prescriptive historical data, "Legal records are a treacherous source for social history. They may be used to reverse any generalization about the majority" (p. 62).

There is a central theoretical problem for these authors. While most social historians would claim to be interested in the link between the different written sources and the actual condition of the elderly in the past, few (e.g., Achenbaum, 1978) attempt an explicit linkage. Achenbaum's examination of this link leads him to conclude that, for the period of his study,

> The interplay of broad intellectual trends and pervasive structural changes in society at large between 1790 and 1914 profoundly affected prevailing notions about the elderly without having either an immediate or a dramatic impact on the aged's demographic and socioeconomic situation, or vice versa. (p. 86)

However, he would seem at the same time to accept exactly such an hypothesis for more recent periods, and to base it on exactly the sorts of sources ("the most frequently cited works in gerontology and geriatrics ... published popular opinion polls, and ... insights derived by reading retrospective articles on the 'state of the field'" 1978, pp. 177) with which he found a "basic discontinuity between prevailing images and the actual experiences of growing old" (1978, p. 167) in the earlier period. Haber (1983), meanwhile, seems to accept as unproblematic the *theory* that,

> The ideas of the early gerontological specialists .... their policies and programs .... serve as a useful perspective by which to evaluate attitudes toward senescence. In their development, acceptance, and implementation, such measures reflect changing beliefs about old age in nineteenth-century America. (p. 6)

Fischer (1978) seems to believe that the writings of contemporaneous experts rather unproblematically mirror the lived condition of the elderly; in fact he actively rejects much of the evidence which is not the pronouncements of colonial geri-experts. The underlying tendency of the historical-ideological approach to the condition of the aged is to assume that broad ideological representations are good indications of the situation of the aged as a whole.

A more strictly methodological slant to this problem is the issue of whether the changes seen in the status of the elderly are really just changes in the relative statuses of the professions which have been differentially utilized for the studies of different historical era. It could be argued that the high status of the aged found for colonial America can be better explained as a function of the almost exclusive use of ministers of religion as the main archival source for judging the status of the aged in the colonial period. In contrast, the relatively lower status found in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is due to the increasing use of the writings (often polemical) of the medical and social welfare professionals of that period. While this shift in primary sources may represent a real shift in the relative statuses of the professions, this does not answer the question of whether the data concerning the status of the aged simply represent the different relations of ministers of religion and the newer professions to the aged rather than to any real change in the status of the aged. Fischer's (1978) work at least hints that this is the case when he finds that, "there were a few clergymen[6] in the first third of the [nineteenth] century who continued to deliver 'centennial addresses'" in the spirit of the colonial period (p. 120). If there were a true change in the generally recognized status of the aged between the two time periods then such a change should be found as much in the works of ministers as in the writings of medical and social welfare professionals.

Rather than treating these sources (i.e., the writings of different *experts* and *professionals*) as in themselves intentional activity, these sources are treated as dead, unreflective, and mechanical descriptions rather than an aspect of the, essentially, political struggle of those professions to define the aged in line with their professional interests. As a result we are left with the problem of whether all of these effects are simply the spurious effect of the rise and fall of the different professions in America, their struggles to categorize the aged in terms of their professional views of the world,[7] and their differing professional relations to the aged. For example, Fischer's (1978) theory of the "exaltation" of the aged in colonial America is dominated by the writings of ministers of religion. It could be argued, that this "exaltation" can be better seen as a reflection of the relation of this dominant profession in the colonial era to the aged rather the relation of the aged to the rest of society. As promoters of social conservatism, in particular the continuation of a system which placed the church as the central social institution, ministers of religion inevitably argued for the higher social status of the elderly as a proxy for their own political status. As *marketers* of life after death they inevitably found, in turn, the greatest support among those with the most proximal interest in that message.

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[6] Though the only clergymen for this period he cites.

[7] Which of course are only rarely at odds with their material interests.

Achenbaum's (1978) account of the rapid decline of the aged from circa 1860 in turn is dominated by the literature of the medical profession which rapidly gained political power and social status from the Civil War onwards. By the early twentieth century they had become a dominant profession, to a great extent at the expense of religious professionals. Again it could be argued that the declining status of the aged in late nineteenth century America can be better seen as a reflection of the shift in emphasis from the relation of the ministers of religion to the aged to the relation of the medical profession to the aged. The relation of doctors to the aged inevitably came to produce a view of aging as a disease, as they saw everything else they touched (e.g., birth). So long as aging and the physical symptoms which accompanied it remained something which the medical profession could do little to change (as remained the case until at least the Second World War) but which they deemed, nonetheless, to be their province, age was viewed as a condition of inevitable decay. Haber's (1983) vision of the more gradual, steady, and at times ambiguous decline in the status of the aged reflects her addition of the increasingly influential social welfare and administrative professionals to the medical-centred categorizers of the aged of Achenbaum . As advocates of the aged these professionals viewed aging as a *social* as much as a *medical problem.* The ambiguity of the categorization of the elderly, as the worthy poor (nineteenth century) or as minority (in recent years; Abu-Laban & Abu-Laban, 1977), by these professional advocates arises from their dual role as the professional *protectors*, emphasizing disabilities, and *promoters*, emphasizing worthiness, of their subjects.

The main sources that all three of these researchers make are literary, as opposed to census and other numerical records. Those who have utilized numerical data on the history of aging in New England have generally questioned the results which Fischer (1978), Achenbaum (1978), and Haber (1983) present. As mentioned above, in a content analysis of fiction from *Littell's Living Age* for the years 1845-1882, Range and Vinovskis' (1981) found little evidence of a decline in status among the aged. Demos's (1978) study of data on seating plans in early colonial New England churches "strongly suggests that age in *general* was not an important criterion of social rank" (p. 247), and that the pattern of age heaping showed little evidence for the exaltation of age.

Those working within what can loosely be called a mode of production approach[8] have come up with a rather different picture of the condition of the aged in New England. While gerontological modernization theorists, along with Fischer (1978), suggest that retirement in traditional societies was both more gradual and less common than in industrialized societies, the mode of production theorists give a more varied view of the subject. While primary data about retirement traditional or early-modern societies is scarce, Demos (1978) suggests that retirement in pre- or proto-industrial New England followed the pattern of the aged moving to more menial jobs with increasing age, though he also presents evidence for straightforward dismissal due to age. Chudacoff and Hareven (1978) describe a pattern of high unemployment among men aged 55+, and those who did find work were mostly found in general labour and other low-status, low-pay jobs.

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[8] This is my term and is not altogether satisfying, as to a great extent, many who have been classified *mode of production* theorists implicitly, e.g., Poulantzas (1982), or explicitly, e.g., Hindess and Hirst (1977), deny the importance of history.

The continental European work on the history of the aged has often taken a less rosy view of the situation of the aged. While some of those looking at the condition and status of the aged argue for the interpretation given by GMT (e.g., Braun, 1966), others see the status of the aged in Europe as being quite different from that given by gerontological modernization for *traditional* societies. Simone de Beauvoir (1972), in her seminal historical treatment of aging, primarily from literary sources, concludes that the aged were generally devalued in the past.

Stearns (1976) has been one of the most prominent of those arguing that the ideology of old age existing before the transformation from traditional to modern society in Europe, was already hostile to the aged.

> Far from the traditional veneration for old age which one might expect to find in France—which I had expected to pursue, in fact, in launching this study—one finds almost unmitigated disdain. This disdain persisted well into the contemporary era.... (p. 18)

Stearns' (1972) early work points to an emphasis on the ideological aspects of aging, and to their importance in understanding aging and the aged. In his study of the formation of social welfare attitude in the early industrial period, he undertakes a comparison of the attitudes of French, British and German industrialists towards social welfare issues. He finds that French entrepreneur's attitude toward workers, differed from those of English and other European entrepreneurs, generally showing a more paternalistic attitude towards workers (e.g., paying better wages) but being slower to recognize labour unions. With the growth in the size of business organizations and with the improved material condition of workers this paternalism died out.

The effect of labour unions on state welfare policies in relation to the aged is also an important aspect of Stearns' (1976) major study of the aged in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France. As the quote above illustrates, Stearns finds the origin of the low status of the aged arose, not from the transition to modernity, but rather to have existed within traditional rural French society. In his view, while modernization at first simply repeated the misanthropic view of the aged which it had inherited from traditional culture, in the twentieth century this view changed for the better.

Stearns (1976) feels that France should serve as a good test of GMT because France, along with Sweden, had the highest proportion of the elderly (65+) in pre- and early-modern Europe. The numbers of old were even higher when one considers that by 1900 in France "...perhaps a majority at least in the cities, ... believed they were or would be old at 45" (p. 16).

Most of Stearns' (1976) work examines the nature and possible causes of the "almost unmitigated disdain" with which the French regarded the elderly. In opposition to the GMT thesis that one of the causes of the high esteem accorded to old age was its rarity, Stearns shows that the old were never rare in French society in fact, "The old were a nuisance" (p. 22). While the old were not rare in traditional France, few could reasonably expect to grow old. The omnipresence of death in the traditional village was fundamental to the peasant view of death and old age. The high probability of the former resulted in a disinterest and a disbelief in aging, at least on the personal level.

According to Stearns (1976) the declining importance of property ownership for the vast majority of the population, which GMT posits as one of the bases of status of the aged, served to decrease inter-generational tension. Stearns finds convincing proof of this in the decrease in crimes against the elderly; from the most likely group to be the victims of murder in the mid-nineteenth century, on a *per capita* basis, the aged as a group are the least likely victims today.

Stearns (1976) is most interested in the position of the aged in French working-class culture. In nineteenth-century France, according to Stearns, workers expected to be old between 45 and 55 of age, by modern standards and by the standards of their bourgeois contemporaries, was middle aged. French working-class culture saw *old age* as no more than a short period of deterioration followed quickly by death. For the working class, old age was a foreign concept. In this, Stearns' arguments seem to become a bit contradictory. If the aged were not rare in traditional society, and if they were generally devalued, how, when old age was a concept *foreign* to the French working class, are we to find the source of French working class attitudes in their traditional rural background?

Stearns (1976) partially answers this seeming contradiction by, ironically, resurrecting one of the gerontological modernization theorists' main arguments, i.e., that it was the possession of rural agricultural property which was the source of the elders' power and prestige. Stearns argues that as the French peasantry moved to the cities, in the process of becoming proletarianized, they lost the ability to retire, "even in the messy, contentious fashion of the rural population" (p. 44), ultimately because they had little if anything to offer their progeny in return, in an environment still dominated by poverty. Seemingly, while the existence of attitudes, overwhelmingly negative, towards aging could be retained by the French working class from their traditional background, attitudes towards retirement could not.

The contradictions within Stearns' work highlights the weakness in ideologically-based arguments on the status of the aged. In focusing on the expressed attitudes toward the aged, it is too easy to misinterpret the significance of inter-generational tension which existed in agricultural and traditional bourgeois society. It would seem that for such tensions to exist, the elderly must have wielded considerable power. The source of that power appears to have been, as Stearns (1976) recognizes, the control of land or of productive property. The fact that, "older widows ... were an object of special suspicions ...." (p. 31) would seem further proof of this, the *special suspicion* resulting from the contradictions which old women represented in an essentially patriarchal society, i.e., they were both powerless, by virtue of being women, and powerful, by virtue of being old and by holding land.[9] Studies from other traditional rural areas of Europe, such as Austria (Berkner, 1972) and Switzerland (Braun, 1966), also indicate that control of productive property was the basis of much of the status of the aged in traditional agrarian societies. It would seem that an "unmitigated disdain" (Stearns, 1976, p. 18) was probably only one of a range of attitudes to the elderly held in traditional society which the French working class could have adopted for the aged. What needs to be explained is why "unmitigated disdain" rather than some other facet of the attitude to old age, such as active antipathy, was not chosen.

To a large degree Stearns (1976) resolves the contradictions in his work through his analysis of the material condition of French workers at the end of the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth centuries. Stearns shows that old workers faced a regular pattern of job change quite different from those faced by, for example, elderly peasants. Older French workers regularly saw their job incomes and the value of their job skills decline while facing frequent demotions in the work place. Older workers were consistently forced into the sub-class of unskilled, marginally employed, and poorly paid workers. This presented a problem to younger workers: first, they witnessed the sad spectacle of their probable future, if they lived to old age; second, the elderly were exploited as cheap labour by employers, thus limiting or depressing the pay of younger workers.

The excellent analysis of the actions and attitudes of the French labour unions by Stearns (1976) gives credence to this critique of his analysis of the attitude of French workers to the elderly and to retirement programs. French unions had, at best, only a minor interest in retirement programs, sharing—in fact reinforcing—the working-class view of old age outlined above. Pensions obtained by unions, especially in the private sector, were seen primarily as provision for widows and orphans rather than as support for workers in their old age. Stearns shows that this view of pensions was to a great degree rational with 45% of all workers dying before age 50 and many, perhaps most, of those living past that age losing their jobs and with them the opportunity to take advantage of any pensions. In 1911 the French government became more involved in providing state pensions, though initially they were very small. Even for those with only a modest pension plan, at first restricted almost entirely to government and state monopoly workers at first, most did retire. However, among railway workers, for example, only 20% of workers over the retirement age continued to work. Despite the small size of government pensions and most private ones, by 1926 most blue-collar workers were retiring by age 65, and a much higher percentage of white-collar workers were also doing so and on average at an earlier age.

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[9] Another way to understand this contradiction is to see old women within *officially* patriarchal societies as able to, by virtue of being an old *person* (the elderly being, to some degree, viewed as genderless), transform the power which they always exerted but which had to be kept, officially, secret (the *eminence grise*) into a public power which men, at least younger men, had to officially recognize (see Bourdieu 1977, pp.@40^43, for an analysis of the relation between *official* and *unofficial* culture).

Unfortunately, as Stearns (1976) points out, sources of women's working history are scarce. In the chapter in his book dealing with women, he outlines the demographics of aging and widowhood and their affects on the lives of older women. Most women and men in both rural and urban areas lived in nuclear family households, before as well as during the period of industrialization. In those cases of multi-generational living arrangements (a distinct minority in both rural and urban areas and in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), most older people living with adult children lived with a daughter, except in rural areas where fathers would live with sons, or better, sons with fathers, as the basis of these living patterns, was frequently the fathers' control of the land.

Stearns (1976) summarizes the status of the aged in traditional and early-modern France in his statement that:

> The attitudinal problems of aging are not products of modern life or capitalism alone. They go deeper, and hence are most firmly lodged in a society like France that is in full contact with the traditional culture toward aging. (p. 153)

While what Stearns' says is reasonable, it requires two further points of clarification: First, what is the relationship between the *attitudinal problems of aging* and the actual lived conditions of the aged? Second, why is it that some aspects of traditional culture toward aging were adopted and others abandoned? Perhaps again this question is, at least practically, unanswerable. The problem again seems to be in trying to link broad intellectual trends with structural changes in society. Studies of structural changes, especially of the family and household situation of the aged, have usually been conducted at the community level. On the other hand those broad intellectual trends can almost never be directly linked to the specifics of those community level studies and almost never come out of those communities.

2. Historical-Social Structural Approaches to the Status of the Aged

a. The Demographic Approach to the Condition of the Aged

Among those working on the social-historical condition of the aged in England several have been prominent in criticizing some of the central points of GMT (Laslett, 1976; 1984; 1988; 1995 and those working with him (J. E. Smith, 1984a, R. M. Smith, 1984b; Thomson, 1984; Wall, 1984; 1995). Their approach has been labelled the "demographic approach" (Anderson, 1980) due to their almost exclusive reliance on demographic sources.

Their two most important contributions to gerontological studies have been in; 1) demonstrating that the extended multi-generational family household, posited by the proponents of GMT, within which the elderly received respect and care, was probably never a feature of northwest Europe (Laslett, 1984, p. 380), and 2) arising from this, the formulation of the "nuclear hardship" hypothesis, the social norm of neolocal residence, the predominance of the nuclear family as the basic domestic group, and the implicit social implications that the, "more widespread the nuclear family, and the more strictly neo-local rules are applied, the more important collective institutions will be for the security of the individual" (p. 156).

England, and to a yet uncertain degree the rest of northwest Europe, seems to have supported the dependent (including the aged) portion of the population through the collectivity rather than through extended kinship systems. Following from this, Thomson (1984; 1991) has argued that the process of *modernization*, at least in Britain, involved quite the opposite process. This is and contrary to the view promulgated by GMT that it was the process of modernization and industrialization which resulted in the decline of the extended family support for the aged and its replacement by support from the collectivity. Thomson contends that, at least for England:

> On a continuum stretching between total personal responsibility at one pole, and full community responsibility at the other, the elderly have, for several centuries at least, been positioned near to the collective pole. (1991, p. 196)

In fact he argues (1984) that the process of modernization, or more particularly the process of the dismantling of the Poor Laws from the 1830s through the 1880s, resulted in drastic decreases in community support for the needy, especially for the aged, and an increasing burden for the support of the needy put on the families, including those who would be part of an extended family, i.e., siblings and grandchildren.

J. E. Smith (1984) examined the situation of widows in *traditional* England and found that from 1671 to 1820, most widows were heads of their households, that most of those households included no co-resident kin with the exception of unmarried children, and that an important reason for the number of widow-headed households appears to have been that they had access to poor relief. Wall (1984) showed that for widows and widowers over 65 years of age, only 28% lived with their married children and that the remainder either lived alone or with more distant kin or lodgers. The percentage of the elderly as a whole living with married children in Wall's study remained fairly constant between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (12% of males and 17% of females; Wall, 1995, p. 89) and the more recent past (20% of males and 25% of females in the 1920s; Wall, 1995, p. 93), findings which run counter to the predictions of GMT.

More recent work has questioned at least the extent of the "pure nuclear family system" and the importance of the "nuclear hardship" hypothesis (Kertzer, 1995). Kertzer argues that in many parts of Europe, e.g., central Italy, Hungary, East Prussia, the elderly did look to the extended family for support and that even in England strict neolocal residence requirements did not really exist before the twentieth century. Instead, he argues, what existed was what he calls "a nuclear reincorporation household system" where widowed individuals 'normally', and therefore he assumes 'normatively', were reincorporated into a child's (usually a son's) household. The development of the modern 'pure nuclear family system' is the result of a true 'normative shift' which has primarily taken place in this century, mostly since the Second World War.

One of the problems with Kertzer's "nuclear reincorporation household system", as it is with Laslett's "neo-local rules", is that there is little if any explicit evidence for the existence of normative rules governing children's residence on marriage, or on the elderly living with their children. Both Kertzer and Laslett assume that there must be direct normative rules underlying observable residential patterns, but neither give evidence for these rules beyond the observable patterns they are said to explain. As Wall has pointed out:

> By contrast with the frequent references that can be found to various forms of behavior that were deemed to be morally offensive or contrary to the natural order, such as conceiving a child out of wedlock, mésalliances, and scolding wives, little appears to have been said about when, or even whether, children should leave the parental home, or about the rights of an elderly parent to live with a child. (Wall, 1995, p. 103)

Both Kertzer and Laslett confound the 'normative rule' in the statistical sense and 'normative rule' in the moral proscriptive sense, assuming that the existence of the former is proof of the latter (see Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 22 ff.).

The lack of any explicit proscriptions *re* residence, especially as there were many explicit references to support by children of their parents (Thomson, 1984), suggests that there was no 'norm' that aged individuals live with their children and that, instead, there was an ethic that children are in debt to their parents and that they should not allow their parents to suffer, either economically or socially. However, this debt could be fulfilled in a number of ways and co-residence is by no means the only one, although in certain times and places it may have been the only way; for example in those regions of nineteenth century Italy which were dominated by share-cropping (Kertzer & Karweit, 1995). In other cases, for example late nineteenth century Texas (Gutmann, 1995), co-residence was not the norm.

b. Mode of Production Approach to the Aged

The difference between what has been labelled the 'demographic approach to the condition of the aged' and what I have labelled the 'mode of production approach to the condition of the aged' lies mostly in their level of analysis rather than their underlying assumptions. The former looks at the aged at the macro-demographic level and in relation to national and international level economic changes such as industrialization and the growth of the market economy, whereas the latter tend to look at the aged at the local level and relate that to more local economic situation, such as the existence of specific industries.

Quadagno (1982) has undertaken the most complete examination, within the mode of production approach, of the question of the status and condition of the elderly in the transition from proto- to modern industrialism in England. She begins her work with a critique of GMT. The gist of her argument is that there is no simple relationship between modernization and the situation of the aged. Quadagno believes that in Western cultures, age was only consistently revered among the upper classes, and even that reverence was often conditional. However, she agrees, along with Berkner (1972) and Braun (1966) among others, that, in general, in cases where the elderly owned and effectively controlled land and other forms of productive property they seemed to be able to maintain control and retain their status.

Much of the problem with GMT, as the mode of production theorists conceive it, is due to GMT's overgeneralization of *the traditional* pattern. For example, GMT's argument that traditional, agrarian societies were marked by higher proportions of co-residence is contradicted by Anderson's (1971) findings for nineteenth century Lancashire, where in both rural and urban areas few of the aged lived apart from their children, though the percentage living alone was higher in rural areas due to poor economic conditions and housing shortages in the urban areas. Quadagno's (1982) work shows a similar existence of extended households and of household production in an industrializing situation. Sons of farmers tended to stay on the farm. In fact there is an increase in numbers of family members living on the parental farm in this period due to changes in the world market for grain which pushed English farmers out of that traditionally labour intensive form of farming. Among rural labourers there was a decrease in the proportion of aged farm workers except in the most isolated areas and in the least desirable jobs. A similar trend, i.e., the replacement of overtly capitalist farming by family farms, took place in North America around the same time, also due to the mechanization of agriculture (Friedmann, 1978).

As Quadagno (1982) points out, modernization theory has tended to over-romanticized household production. While later, factory based industrialization did destroy family production, even where household production did survive, the solidarity of the family production unit was often a solidarity of poverty.

> The case study of household production in Chilvers Coton indicated that older people were most often living in a family setting in 1851, when the hand-loom ribbon weaving thrived, more than 80% of all aged men and women were living with kin. Yet there are no indications that this household arrangement was based on the power and prestige of the aged. Rather, these were fragile household economies in which family members pooled their resources and combined their labour so that all could survive. Extended family units were not formed by parents moving in with married children. In fact, children married early and established independent households. Extended family units were created in times of crises when widowed or separated children returned to their parents' households. (Quadagno, 1982, pp. 196-197)

While GMT suggests that retirement of the aged in modern societies was due to the changing nature of industrial work and, therefore, that in traditional societies retirement was both more gradual and less common, the mode of production theorists give a more varied view of the subject. Quadagno's (1982) thesis concerning retirement nicely sums up much of the work on retirement in history:

> It appears that people in the past retired when they had the resources, either land or wealth, to do so. Those who continued to work did so out of financial necessity rather than out of desire. This does not mean that industrialization had no impact on retirement, for the modern form of retirement involving a formal system of income transfer administered through a large-scale bureaucracy appears to be historically unique. (p. 22)

Did advances in technology adversely affect aged workers relative to young ones? In early industrial England, France, and the United States, it has generally been argued that older workers tended to be found in older, less mechanized trades and in the low status jobs, e.g., general labour (Achenbaum, 1978; Graebner, 1980; Quadagno, 1984a; 1984b; 1988). Many older workers in general (or 'casual') labour probably entered it in their old age, having been displaced from other, usually more highly skilled, occupations by dismissal or as those occupations became obsolete. However, in some occupations, such as bootmaking, where mechanization remained limited until well into the twentieth century, being older could be an advantage as long as the level of mechanization remained low (Quadagno, 1982).

Gratton (1993) in a study of the aged in the 1920s in the United States argues that the aged had always been more affluent than younger people in America and furthermore their economic position had improved between 1890 and 1930, the period of the major growth in American industrialism. However:

> The good fortune of older men and women depended in large part on a familistic, rather than individualistic economic strategy. This strategy led to considerable accumulation of wealth in the industrial period and the dependency of older persons was undoubtedly lower in the 1920s than in any previous time in American history. (p. 46)

Yet this is the period when Gratton's regular co-author Haber claims that the degraded status of the aged had come to full fruition. Again the relation between the actual situation of the aged and their social status, at least in the dominant intellectuals' attitudes, is clearly far from a simple one.

Meanwhile, technological advances had a somewhat anomalous affect on women's work, sometimes (e.g., in London) actually increasing *homework*, and the opportunities for women's employment. For example the introduction of the sewing machine moved much clothing manufacture from small, essentially capitalist workshops, to a sub-contracted system of business which employed women, often older women, at home, though by no means could these women be treated as any sort of independent producers.

Quadagno (1982, Chapter 4; 1984a; 1984b) along with Dowd (1980; 1981), Haber (1978; 1983), Haber and Gratton (1987), and Myles (1984), in light of GMT"s contention that government support of the elderly has tended to loosen familial social bonds, have examined the history of government support of welfare legislation. While almost all agree that GMT"s contention is false and that government financial support has tended to decrease family tensions and did not cause a decline in family support for aged, there have been fruitful disagreements over the character of and the reasons for government support.

Government support of the poor, in England, was not a phenomenon which arose only with industrialization. The Poor Laws had been in effect from the seventeenth century, and in fact it was in the context of later industrialization, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, that a real decline of the level of government support for the poor (and especially for the aged) occurred (R. M. Smith, 1984; Thomson, 1991). This decline was only later to be reversed in the early twentieth century. While it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine if the rate of poverty among the aged increased in nineteenth century England, the public, or at least the educated public, perception of it did. The degraded view of old age, which marked the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, was used by both sides in the welfare reform and old age pension debates. The middle classes used the view to argue against state pensions and for individual initiative, self-control, and thrift, while the working class and its allies used the same view to argue against the effects of capitalism and to fight for greater state intervention in social welfare policies. However, the results, state pensions, were not a straightforward result of class confrontation and a victory of the dominant class, but rather were ultimately a compromise between the propertied classes and the propertyless.

The critics of GMT, from the historical-ideological and from the historical-social structural perspectives have each taken issue with part of the relationship between the socio-economic situation of the aged and the social status of the aged which GMT treats as unproblematic. Both those studying the ideological status of the aged and those studying the socio-economic status of the aged have generally not been able to adequately theorize the relationship between the two. The former generally assume that the social and economic status of the aged "reflected beliefs of those groups that assumed control over the elderly" (Haber, 1983, p. 6) while the latter, where they have addressed the issue, have generally assumed that the situation of the aged must have been, in turn, reflected in general social norms.

A complete analysis of the status and condition of the elderly in the past would include an analysis of both the *ideology* of old age[10] and the social structures which condition and in turn are conditioned by them. However, many of those attempting to integrate them have recognized the generally unsatisfactory nature of the link between the two (e.g., Achenbaum, 1978, pp. 167-171; Minois, 1989/1987, pp. 300-302). While the relation of ideology and social structures ("rhetoric and reality") in terms of specific institutions such as the poorhouse seem generally illuminating (e.g., Haber, 1993), more recent attempts to link the ideological representation of old age and the reality of the life of the aged, in general, (e.g., Haber and Gratton 1994)[11] would still seem to lack that general link, the "ultimate handle", which Stearns saw as lacking in Minois work (Stearns, 1991, p. 269).

Closely related is the question of whether or not the aged actually formed a distinct and recognized social category. While old age in modern societies may be "a stage of life both clearly and categorically defined" and "age, more than any other criterion, sets the elderly apart from society" (Haber, 1983, p. 1), it is not clearly established by those working within historical-ideological approaches to the condition of the aged (for whom the question is of greater importance) that that was the case in the periods which they studied. The fact that, as Fischer points out, "In some strange and paradoxical way, old age seems actually to have intensified the contempt visited upon the poor man." (1978, p. 60) would seem to suggest that age was not a clearly defined social category and further that the attitudes to the aged was much more situationally specific than Fischer's general 'exultation' would suggest. If the aged do not form a distinct social group then the relationship between ideology of the aged and the condition of the aged becomes even more problematic.

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[10] Or better *habitus*, i.e., the socially informed and informing knowledge about the aged and being old which is not primarily ideological. Ideally a complete social^historical science entails two moments:

> Methodological objectivism, a necessary moment in all research, by the break with primary experience and the construction of objective relations which it accomplishes, demands its own supersession. In order to escape the *realism of the structure*, which hypostatizes systems of objective relations by converting them into totalities already constituted outside of individual history and group history, it is necessary to pass from the *opus operatum* to the *modus operandi*, statistical regularity or algebraic structure to the principle of the production of this observed order [i.e., the habitus], and to construct the theory of practice, or, more precisely, the theory of the mode of generation of practices, which is the precondition for establishing an experimental science of the *dialectic of the internalization of externality and externalization of internality*, or, more simply, of incorporation and objectification. (Bourdieu 1977, p.@72)

[11] In this recent work they have undertaken more of an analysis of the "structural factors" as opposed to the "cultural attitudes" (Haber & Gratton, 1994, p.@xi) more characteristic of their earlier work.

Perhaps the basic problem in trying to link those "broad intellectual trends and pervasive structural changes in society" (Achenbaum, 1978, p. 86) is that the intellectual trends are too broad and at the same time not broad enough. They are too broad in that there may never have been a broad intellectual attitude to the aged; there may have been attitudes to more specific groups of the aged, attitudes to the aged in specific situations or in terms of specific issues, or attitudes to the aged held by specific social groups. Attempts to construct a general intellectual attitude to social structures flounder because there were actually many intellectual attitudes, founded on specific social questions and struggles, e.g., old age pensions, filial support laws, &c., and brought out only in the specific context of those struggles. They may not be broad enough (or perhaps not specific enough) because the intellectual trends, the rhetoric of old age, uncovered by those studying the history of ideology of old age come overwhelmingly from a very narrow section of the population, ministers of religion, doctors, social scientists. However, studies of the socio-economic status of the age come from large scale demographic based work dominated by those from classes not producing written forms of the rhetoric of old age (e.g., Gratton & Rotondo, 1991; Ransom & Sutch, 1995) or from studies of communities from which there is little if any written evidence of the ideology of old age held (e.g., Quadagno, 1982).

II. Review of the Literature on the Aged in Newfoundland and Canada

Despite the lack of a substantive historical research on the aged in the past, Canada and Newfoundland's social history is also commonly presented as one in which there was a *traditional* period when the elderly were revered and supported within the extended family and a modern one in which the elderly are at best marginalized and isolated, a Canadian and Newfoundland "informal existent dogmatic theory" (despite continuing critiques, e.g., Nett, 1981; 1990):

> The personal problems of the aged stem primarily from changes in the way of life and values of our society. Most important, the extended family unit of the past, in which elderly folk lived with their grown children, has been increasingly replaced by the nuclear family, made up of a husband, wife, and their young unmarried children.... The change in our cultural values has also meant a devaluation of old age. Traditionally, the older people made significant contributions to the household economy and their judgments were respected. But our rapidly changing society, their experiences and opinions seem to be less relevant and it is more difficult to provide them with meaningful and satisfying roles. (Elkin, 1968, pp. 131-132)

> It is clear that the family in a mass society, of which Canada is a dramatic example, has been transformed from an extended family to a nuclear family. It has changed, too, from a three-generation or four-generation family to a two-generation family. (Schlesinger, 1979, p. 170)[12]

While not exclusively about the aged, Queen's (1974) characterization of Newfoundland society as organized around the "patrilocal and patricentric extended family" (p. 383) and isolated from collective institutions clearly fits the modernization paradigm.

To date the only limited primary social-historical research on the aged in Canada has been almost exclusively focussed on Ontario. The earliest historical work is by Synge (1980), who studied the elderly in and around Hamilton from 1900 to 1920; however, her work is a re-examination of data she collected in her research on families. More recently other historical work on the aged in Ontario has also been begun. Snell (1990) examined maintenance agreements between the aged and, most often, their children. He has also researched filial responsibility laws in Canada, with most of his data come from Ontario. Stewart (1992) has made an historical study of the elderly inmates of the Wellington County House of Industry in rural Ontario in the period 1877-1907.

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[12] Despite the fact that the studies which do exist suggest that such a *traditional* pattern is at least questionable. For a good review see Nett (1981; 1990).

There have been a number of studies of establishment of Old Age Pensions Canada, starting with the work of Bryden (1974) and, more recently, Orloff (1993). Struthers (1992) examined the formation of the Old Age Pension bureaucracy in Ontario from 1929 through 1945.

Historical work on the aged in Newfoundland has also yet to be done. As with the rest of Canada there has been some work on social legislation affecting the aged, in particular the Newfoundland Old Age Pension (Snell, 1993). A partial exception to the lack of a social history of the aged in Newfoundland has been Davis's (1985) work, however, her study was not actually an historical study of the aged. Rather it was a re-examination of her ethnography and her work which was undertaken in a modern community which was taken (at least implicitly) to be representative of something like *traditional* (i.e., historic) Newfoundland by virtue of its being a "small, bounded, relatively isolated and homogeneous community." (p. 2)

As historical work on the aged in Newfoundland has also not been done to date there have been no explicit, research based debates over the claims of GMT in terms of Newfoundland, in particular whether or not Newfoundland was the sort of 'traditional' society posited by GMT. However, the dominant paradigm within social and historical studies of Newfoundland has presented Newfoundland, at least from the late nineteenth century to sometime after Confederation with Canada, as exactly the sort of traditional society posited by GMT.

III. Review of the Literature on Newfoundland and Modernization

Modernization theory has informed much of what has been written about Newfoundland. In the Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic State and Prospects of Newfoundland and Labrador (1967), McCorquodale, in line with the rest of the report and reflecting the priorities of both levels of government, presents Newfoundland's problems clearly as one of a 'traditional' society in the process of modernization:

> ... Newfoundland is in a critical period of change. In sociological terms the transition is from a traditional to a modern society with all that this entails for good and evil. The province is apparently experiencing development much as it is being experienced in Africa or Asia ... the adjustment of the individual Newfoundlander is to a not entirely unfamiliar pattern.... The "philosophy" of the Island is changing from one of the independent individual Newfoundlander skilled in a variety of "rural" trades and enmeshed in a mutual aid network of kinship to one of collective organization where men join trade unions or pressure groups, where the educational standards rising they attempt to become specialists and where they look to the impersonal administrative world to supply aid. (pp. 468-469)

Later studies of the Newfoundland 'problem', while perhaps more nuanced, continued to present the problem as one of modernization, of an economy and society some how stagnated in the confines of a traditional, essentially pre-industrial/pre-capitalist society (e.g., Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, 1986, especially pp. 39-53).

Newfoundland has attracted social scientists, particularly anthropologists, because it seemed to offer, within an English-speaking North American context, something at least closely approaching a *traditional* society. Newfoundland society, in particular *outport*[13] society, has been viewed as being more akin to traditional European peasant societies (Faris, 1977) or even to non-European tribal societies (Sider, 1986) than to those Euro-

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[13] *Outports* were the, often small, communities outside of the capital city of St. John's. While the more recently established industrial communities, such as Corner Brook, Gander, and Grand Falls, are sometimes not referred to as *outports*, in general, the island of Newfoundland, at least since Confederation with Canada, has been marked by the simple division between the capital city and the rest of the island, the *outports*, between *townies* and *baymen*.

North American societies which had developed on the North American mainland. At least one of the bases of *traditional* Newfoundland society has been the purported uniqueness of its economic development, in which the basis of the economic organization came to be the family, in particular the *family fishery*—which is treated as practically synonymous with the *inshore*—rather than the market.

The historical origins of the family fishery and of Newfoundland's particular pattern of development—especially in comparison to Britain's other North American colonies—have been proposed by many historians and other social scientists. Earlier historians—most notably Prowse (1895)—did not feel that the origins of the family fishery needed any explanation, it was simply a form of the *traditional* English and Irish society modified by the conditions of Newfoundland. For many of those earlier historians the family fishery was coeval with the fishery.[14] A similar line of argument has recently been revived by Cadigan (1995). In so far as the family fishery continued to exist, Prowse suggested, it was due to impediments to the natural development of the country instigated by outside interests. This theory of retarded development was an important political theme of Newfoundland liberals and progressives up to the present, despite having been rejected by most historians (e.g., Alexander, 1980; English, 1990; Handcock, 1989; Matthews, 1968).

In the 1970s, dependency theory á là Andre Gunder Frank (1975; 1979), was applied to Newfoundland's historical development (S. Antler, 1975, E. Antler, 1981; Faris, 1982; Sider, 1986). According to this theory economic under-development and the social, economic, and political structures of the island were distorted to meet the needs of metropolitan merchant-capitalism. *Traditional* Newfoundland society and its economic structure were not simply indicative of a lack of development but rather creations of merchant capital.

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[14] Though it should be noted that Prowse did not use the term 'family fishery', instead, though not altogether consistently, he used the term 'truck system', the same terminology employed by the often quoted report of the Amulree Commission (Newfoundland Royal Commission, 1933) which doubtless took it from Prowse. However, Prowse did not consider the 'truck system' to be characteristic of Newfoundland society in his day (i.e, the mid to late nineteenth century).

What ever its origins, there has been a general acceptance of the existence from at least 1850 to c. 1950 of what has been characterized as the *family fishery*, and is claimed to have been the basis of a *traditional* Newfoundland society. Gerald Sider (1986) in his book, *Culture and class in anthropology and history: a Newfoundland illustration*, presents the most recent and, perhaps, the most integrated picture and history of this. This view of the family fishery and of its dominant position within traditional Newfoundland society seems to be based on some of the ethnographies of Newfoundland fishing communities done since the Second World War and Newfoundland's incorporation into Canada (see Britan, 1974; Firestone, 1967; Nemec, 1980, and, especially, Faris, 1972).

In communities like Brigus, Harbour Grace, Carbonear, Twillingate, Bonavista, Fogo, and much of the northeast coast of Newfoundland the Labrador fishery was a central economic activity. However, it has generally been argued that the Labrador fishery was not fundamentally different from the local inshore fishery in its relations of production (Cadigan, 1995, pp. 42-44), or at least that it was not so by the end of the nineteenth century (Sider, 1986, p. 139).

Like many nineteenth century historians (Harvey, 1897; Prowse, 1895), Sider (1986) argues that the purported suppression of agriculture by merchant capital was "a substantial factor" in the creation of *traditional* Newfoundland society and of the *family fishery* (1986, p. 109). According to Sider, this suppression of the *natural* development of Newfoundland agriculture explains the fragmented nature of *traditional* Newfoundland society: "the absence of a commercial agriculture was probably the major factor keeping Newfoundland residents from developing extensive ties to one another" (p. 114). Sider argues that in those fragmented communities there was only the most basic class division, between "a mass of relatively—and almost uniformly—impoverished fisherfolk on the one hand, and merchants on the other, with few intermediate positions" (p. 117). As a result of this, Sider argues, there were almost none of the differentiated social institutions which marked settled society such as England and Britain's other North American colonies. In that social environment the extended patrilocal family, made up of three and sometimes four generations, was the centre of both production and consumption and served as the basic, and virtually sole, institution providing social support for the elderly, widows, the infirm, etc. While Prowse (1895) and Harvey (1897) saw the *traditional* Newfoundland society and of the *family fishery* as coeval with settlement, Sider (1986) argues that it was the creation of merchant capitalism and that it was only firmly established by the end of the first third of the nineteenth century.[15]

Much of the literature on Newfoundland development has characterized the *modernization* of Newfoundland society as taking place with the rise of an industrial, off-shore fishery in the 1960s. There has been a general acceptance of a model of social development in which Newfoundland has only recently passed from a *traditional*, family-centred society based on the inshore fishery (including the Labrador fishery) to a more-or-less[16] modern, industrial society based on the offshore fishery and ancillary service industries (see Fairley, 1985 for a critique of this). This model of social development clearly parallels the traditional to modern model of societal development proposed by GMT.

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[15] Prowse and Harvey, however, saw Newfoundland as having passed through this period and very much as a *modern* member of the British Empire at the time they were writing. For Sider, on the other hand, the late nineteenth century represented the *florescence* of *traditional* Newfoundland.

[16] Depending on how far the process is claimed to have progressed.

IV. Rational for Study

Newfoundland presents an interesting area of study for those interested in the status of the aged in either a *traditional or* early-modern society. The division between *traditional* and *modern* which is central to GMT has been pivotal to the debate around the social history of Newfoundland. Critiques of GMT have, to date, served as a focus of much historical work on aging. With a few exceptions (Fairley, 1985; Lewis, 1988; 1990; Neis, 1980; Overton, 1988; and, though not explicitly, Ryan, 1994), debates around the social and economic history of Newfoundland have accepted the *traditional-modern* dichotomy and have instead revolved around the nature and timing of the formation of the *traditional* economy. A direct implication of this thesis is that that division has been made without adequate primary historical research or attention to the range of local variation within Newfoundland (for a critique of Antler, 1975, see Lewis, 1990; and Appendix C for a critique of Cadigan, 1995).

The main problem in both historical social gerontology and the social history of Newfoundland is not the lack of a theoretical focus. GMT has served and continues to serve as a fruitful focus for historical social gerontology and one variety or another of the *modernization* paradigm has served the same purpose for Newfoundland social history. The most pressing need in both areas is for more historical-empirical research to support the present superfluity of theory. This is especially pressing for Newfoundland because the era which is theorized as *traditional* is, for the moment, still within the memory of living informants.

Within both sociology and history the condition of the elderly in the past has traditionally followed Laslett's (1976) "informal existent dogmatic theory". Laslett characterizes this existent theory as being made up of four central propositions:

1) For the aged there was a *before* and an *after* with the transition between the two being associated with industrialization and modernization;

2) In the *before* the aged were accorded respect and affection whereas in the *after* the aged have been rejected by society as unworthy of any prestige;
3) In the *before*, the aged had specific and valued economic and social roles, particularly as grandparents, with the multi-generational household being central to such; and
4) In the *before*, the membership of the domestic group was determined by the social assumption that the domestic group would allocate membership to all senior persons within the kin network of its head, including parents and siblings of his spouse (Laslett, 1976, pp. 89-91).

While many have strongly questioned the characterization of the condition of the elderly in the past as outlined in the *informal existent dogmatic theory* (Laslett being the most notable, Nett, 1981; 1990 having done so for Canada) it remains commonly accepted in much of the social scientific literature.

Even though such an explicit characterization of the condition of the elderly in *traditional* Newfoundland has not been done, it is nonetheless implicit in it. As in other areas of Canada and the world, in Newfoundland the existence of a *traditional* society within which the self-sufficient extended family, through natural sentiment, rather than the state and impersonal bureaucracy, supported the elderly, is a central theme in the justification of governments for the privatization of social support.

Most studies of *modern* Newfoundland place the period of from 1920 through 1949 within the general context of *traditional* Newfoundland. *Traditional* Newfoundland society has been characterized as being organized around the extended patrilocal family, made up of three and sometimes four generations, and serving as the site of production, consumption, and social reproduction. If the elderly lived within the patrilocal extended family then one would expect to find the following:

1) Large households, especially among the elderly and with age being positively correlated with household size.
2) Few if any elderly couples or individuals living on their own.
3) Most older couples living with their married children and grandchildren.
4) Significant numbers of unmarried uncles and aunts living with their nephews and older unmarried brother and sisters living with their (married) brothers.
5) As the elderly would have remained in their extended households, the vast majority would have remained at least nominally heads of those households (if on the other hand certain older or dependent elderly were moving into the neolocally based households of their children due to need then one would expect certain groups, e.g., elderly widows, to not be listed as heads of households).
6) A regular progression of family types through the life course with individuals in the second half of the life course living first with unmarried children, then with married children, and then with married children and grandchildren. The expression of this at the population level would be an increase in the likelihood of an individual living with married children and grandchildren with increasing age regardless of the marital status of that individual.
7) The lack of any significant public support of the elderly.

In so far as the development and growth of the modern welfare state and its effects on the status of the aged is concerned, as is also discussed later, this has generally been argued to have taken place in Newfoundland after the period under study, with Newfoundland's confederation with Canada (Pottle, 1979, p. 70-71).

Clearly a study of a single community in Newfoundland cannot be a general test of GMT. In fact, anticipating the findings of this thesis, one might predict *a priori* that Newfoundland society would not fit the pattern proposed by GMT for *traditional* societies as Newfoundland's origins were, at least partly, in one of those areas of northwest Europe, i.e., England, where, it has been fairly convincingly demonstrated that:

> It is simply not true ... that extended family living was ever characteristic of those societies .... Nor were the social structures of these societies ever dominated by kinship in the way that modernisation would demand.... (Laslett, 1984, p. 380)

However, three points can be made here: first, it has been argued (Fischer, 1978) that New England, which had very similar socio-geographic origins to at least some of Newfoundland's, exhibited the characteristics of the type of traditional society posited by GMT; second, England was only one of the two main socio-geographic origins of Newfoundland society, the other, Ireland, was characterized by the sort of complex family forms characteristic of GMT's *traditional* society (Kertzer, 1991, p. 160) and this instead might have predicted the character of Newfoundland society; third, even assuming that English family and community traditions were dominant in the historical origins of Newfoundland, the characterization of the development of Newfoundland proposed by theorists like Sider and Antler is one in which *traditional* Newfoundland was actually a construction of merchant capital which took place well after settlement and which involved an evolution from a more *modern* society to a *traditional* one.

Another question must also be addressed, that is to what extent was Brigus a 'typical' outport community? Without a comprehensive historical survey of Newfoundland communities (which does not exist) the answer to that question must remain impressionistic. I would argue that there was far more variation within Newfoundland communities than has generally been recognized, even ignoring the new communities such as Corner Brook, Grand Falls, Wabana, &c. The initial ethnographies of Newfoundland (Faris, 1972; Firestone, 1967; Nemec, 1969; Szwed, 1978; now historical sources in themselves) were clearly undertaken within the modernization paradigm and, in light of that, those researchers chose communities to be studied under the assumption that the more isolated the community the easier it would be to reconstruct the pattern of *traditional* Newfoundland. All of these studies were undertaken in communities which were quite isolated even by Newfoundland standards.

Choosing such isolated communities as typical of *traditional* Newfoundland implicitly, and to a great extent explicitly, presupposed the applicability of modernization theory to Newfoundland. Newfoundlanders from the first part of this and the latter part of the last century did not seem to believe that the most isolated communities were the most typical of Newfoundland. Clearly those isolated communities would have been among those which Prowse (1895, p. 380) characterized as the "distant out-ports", "'the dark places of the earth that are full of wickedness'."[17] Communities such as Brigus, Harbour Grace, Carbonear, Twillingate, Bonavista, Fogo, &c., would probably have been what Prowse—who as a judge had first hand experience of much of the island—would have seen as typical Newfoundland communities of his day, i.e., of the mid- to late-nineteenth century.

V. Research Objectives and Questions

The three main goals of this thesis—to examine the situation of the aged in Brigus in the period 1920-1949, to explain that situation historically, and to examine that situation its history in light of the dominant existent theories within social gerontology and Newfoundland studies—are focussed in the linked questions of the existence of the extended family/household and the extent of collective versus familial supports for the aged. The literature on *traditional* Newfoundland would lead one to expect that the extended, three-generation or four-generation family was typical in *traditional* Newfoundland and, linked to that, that the aged would have found virtually all of their support through the extended family rather than through the collectivity.

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[17] The full context of this quote makes it clear that Prowse did not mean that the residents of the more isolated outports were themselves "full of wickedness", rather he was arguing that such settlements were atypical and retrograde.

This study clearly falls into what I have labelled the historical-social structural approach to the history of the aged. While, as mentioned above, ideally studies on the history of the aged would include an analysis of the ideology of old age, along with the socio-economic condition of the aged, the sources employed here allow only the most tentative conclusions about the former.

The first objective of the research is to undertake a basically descriptive and historical study of the condition of the elderly in Brigus in the period from 1920 to 1949. The specific question will be, what was the social and economic condition of the elderly like in what has generally been taken to be *traditional* Newfoundland. The specific questions to be addressed under this are:

1) What were the economic activities and conditions of the elderly?, i.e., work, retirement, and incomes among the elderly.
2) To what extent were the elderly or some of the elderly dependent on the collectivity, that is on charity, formal or informal, the local community, the church and the state for their support?
3) What social welfare provisions were available to the elderly individuals either by virtue of being elderly or by virtue of other characteristics (e.g., widowed, infirm, etc.)?
4) In what type of households did the elderly live? What evidence is there suggesting that the aged lived and were dependent on extended families/households? What was the position of the elderly within those households? What were the relationships of the elderly to other members of their households.
5) How did any of the above change over the period under study?

These questions have been formulated to address the broader concerns of the research. Did the elderly exhibit common economic and social characteristics and to what extent did class and gender interact with age in determining the social condition of the elderly? What were the effects of economic and state structures on the old? What were the effects of the changes which took place in the economic and state structures during the period of study and how in turn might these have effected the social and economic conditions and living arrangements of the elderly in Brigus.

The second objective of this research is to explore the historical background which created the condition of the elderly in Brigus in the period under study. The specific questions to be addressed under this are:

1) What were the direct and indirect effects of the early settlement of Brigus and Newfoundland on those conditions?
2) What were the direct and indirect effects of the origins and the history of the Newfoundland state?
3) What were the historical origins of the social welfare provisions affecting the elderly?

The third objective revolves around the issue of the applicability of GMT to the situation of the elderly in Brigus in a period which has most often been presented as representing *traditional* Newfoundland society.

VI. Summary

As Laslett (1976) has pointed out, much about the condition and status of the elderly in pre-modern or *traditional* society has not been based on any primary historical research. To a great extent *traditional* society has been constructed as a foil to modern society rather than as a concrete social formation the elaboration of which is based on primary historical work, or at least on historical research which employs the sorts of data with which one can start to construct the social life of the elderly in past periods.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

The following is a social historical study employing standard historical methods. The first object of this research is to do a basically a descriptive and an historical study of the situation of the aged in Brigus in the period from 1920-1945. The sources employed include primary historical ones (including the nominal censuses from 1921, 1935, and 1945), secondary historical sources, and ethnographic and oral historical sources (i.e., interviews with informants).

The second object of this research is to attempt to explain the situation of the aged in Brigus in the period from 1920-1945 historically. As historical work on the aged in Newfoundland has not to date been done, the initial work on the history of the aged in Newfoundland will be done and that history will be done, at least partly, as an end in itself.

The third object, which is closely related to the second, is to examine both the situation of the aged in Brigus, c. 1920-1945, and that history in light of the dominant existent theory both within social gerontology, i.e., gerontological modernization theory, and Newfoundland studies.

The 'aged' or 'elderly' when used in this study refer to individuals 65 years of age and older. This age is necessarily an arbitrarily one, and was chosen because it the most common age marker employed in the literature.

I. Research Design

The *objective* features of the social condition of the elderly, the demographic *facts* of where and with whom they lived (the nominal censuses) were gathered, a code book constructed, and the data translated into a machine readable form (actually the construction of the code book and the data input were done in tandem). This coding was done before the other questions could be addressed, i.e., those employing ethnographic (or oral historical) and historical research techniques could be ascertained. The reality of ethnographic field work is that informants are more or less willing and able to provide information on different areas of social life but to what extent cannot be known before preliminary research is undertaken.

Newfoundland is unique in having the nominal census returns open for the period up to 1945. Thus use of this material allows one to reconstruct household and community structures and hence to compare normative prescriptions obtained from oral and written sources with actual recorded living arrangements. The use of census materials in the study of family/household forms has been criticized for providing only a snapshot of family/household development and in so doing obscuring true norms of extended family formation (Berkner, 1972; 1975). In order to address this critique individuals and households[1] were linked across censuses and a detailed examination of the composition and basis of those households was undertaken.

The census materials were used in two ways. First as the source for constructing the *objective* features of the social condition of the elderly: area where they lived, sex, who they lived with and their social position within the household, marital status, age, where they were born, religion, what their occupation was, employment status, income (when available), condition of tenancy (1935 and 1945 only), size and value of their house (1935 and 1945 only), and literacy (1935 and 1945 only).

Secondly the censuses were used as the focus for the interviews with informants. The interviews served to answer some questions about the censuses (illegible entries, uncertain or anomalous entries, etc.). As well the censuses served, to a certain extent, to focus the interviews on the concrete situation of particular individuals and families and their relationship with the community rather than expecting informants to attempt to construct the sociology of the aged for the researcher.

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[1] Though there are some limit to this, see below.

The interviews in turn served as a test of the census data, both in clarification and in pointing out possible errors in recording or in the nature of the categorizations employed in the census forms. While the interviews were of an open-ended, ethnographic style and with no set questions, they generally began with questions about the censuses and developed from there (i.e., on the subjects which the interviewee wished to talk about). In the majority of cases more than one interview took place with the same informants.

II. Data sources

A. The Censuses

Brigus, along with most other Newfoundland communities, was not incorporated until the 1960s. As a result of this the boundaries of the community were unclear and the changes in the size of the population can represent both that fact and real changes in the population. The figures I collected from the nominal censuses and those found in the published versions, which contain aggregate data, are not always identical. Why this is so is unclear and cannot be ascertained from the available records. However the published figures are used for the rate of population change because they are the only figures which go back before 1921. The figures from the nominal censuses are used elsewhere.

The nominal, or manuscript, censuses from 1921, 1935, and 1945 are publicly available documents widely used by the public for genealogical searches, searches for birth parents, etc. and thus are easily assessable at the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador as well as other archives and libraries. They have not, however, been extensively employed by either historians or other social scientists. Copies of the nominal censuses from before 1921 have been lost, except for a handful of communities for which copies of the 1911 census exist. However, Brigus is not among the latter and the first available nominal census for Brigus is 1921.

The nominal censuses were hand written enumerations of the population done in the community by a local resident. A series of blank cells were filled in, though for some of the questions a limited number of categories were specified at the base of each sheet. Unfortunately the instructions to enumerators (referred to in the census sheets) seem to have been lost for all three censuses, though some rudimentary instructions are given on the record sheets for recording the census information. However, as the 1945 census from Brigus shows, clearly not all enumerators either had access to or consulted the instructions. On all three censuses the following questions were asked:

Dwelling: Here a number was assigned based on order of enumeration. Since there were no street addresses and the number was arbitrary dwellings could not be positively linked across censuses.

Family: This also had a number assigned, but was based on order of enumeration, therefore, no link can be made across censuses.

Town: The name of the community or area of community was listed; however, there were no municipal government or official boundaries, so communities/neighbourhoods which are listed on one census disappear on the next. In some cases this is because the community actually disappeared (e.g., Grebe's Nest, Bull Cove) while in others it was because the name of the larger community was used by the enumerator (e.g., Frog Marsh, Riverhead, and Gullies, sections of Brigus, were simply recorded as Brigus in later censuses).

Name: Surname and given name(s) and/or initials were recorded. This was the primary link across censuses, though marriage made the link more or less problematic in the case of women.

Sex: Male or female was recorded.

Relationship to head of household: No directions are given on the census sheets, but in the censuses other than in 1945 (see below) most relationships are clear and usually detailed (e.g., 'illegitimate grandchild'). However, relationships between individuals other than the head of the household sometimes are not clear, e.g., when a child was listed as 'grandson' but it is not always certain if those listed as son or daughter (especially if not married) of the head were the child's parents.

Marital status: Code at bottom of each sheet specified 'Single', 'Married', 'Widowed', or 'Divorced or legally separated' and these classifications were used.

Age: Given in years and, for those less than one year old, in months.

Community of birth: In 1921 no direction given and responses are very specific (e.g., 'Frog Marsh, Brigus', Sydney, Cape Breton'). In 1935 only broad national categories were recorded (e.g., 'Newfoundland', 'Labrador', 'England'). In 1945 district and countries were recorded (e.g., 'Port-de-Grave', 'Bonavista Bay', 'New York').

Year of immigration: Mostly left blank as 'not applicable'. It was recorded for those who moved to the community from outside Newfoundland.

Religion: Religious affiliation was stated. Whatever religion the person stated was recorded.

Occupation: In all years this seems to have been an open ended question as the range of answers was great and often idiosyncratic (e.g., 'Raising poultry', 'Gentleman', 'Carman' [the local term for carter]). In the coding of this data even minor differences in responses were coded differently except for the most trivial variations in terminology (e.g., 'labourer' and 'labouring').

Industry: As with occupation, this seems to have been an open ended question with a wide range of often idiosyncratic answers (e.g., 'Unable to often work', 'Aged', 'On some schooner'). Again differing response were not collapsed in the coding process.

Employment status: In all censuses the code at bottom of each sheet specified 'Employer', 'Employee', or 'On own account', in the 1935 and 1945 censuses

'Daughter or wife working without regular wage' was added. The 'On own account' category was defined in the introduction to the published version of the 1945 census as, "one who operates his own business without the assistance of wage or salaried employees." (Dominion Bureau of Statistics [Canada], 1949, p.xiv) Clearly what the government wanted here were independent craftspersons, small farmers, and professionals. However, in the nominal census many casual labourers (i.e., working for others but on an irregular basis), some who appear to have been employers, and some who, from other sources, clearly were employers (including one of the major employers in the community) listed themselves 'working on own account'. While the 1921 census taker seems to have understood, more or less, what was wanted here, the 1935 and 1945 enumerators, clearly did not, enumerating people who were clearly employers (including the major merchants) and others who were clearly employees (e.g., those working at the whaling factory) as working 'on own account'. The 1935 results may be complicated by the employment schemes of the government during the depression (when the government became the nominal employer of fishermen who had previously been and would later return to being employers).

1. Differences in census versions.

The 1921 census also recorded 'Year born', 'Month born', 'Other [than main occupation] work', and some questions on national origin (which, overwhelmingly, simply restated religion, i.e., Catholic listing themselves as Irish, and Methodists and Anglicans as English). The 1935 also recorded 'Home owned or rented' (virtually all were owned), 'Value or rent' of home, 'Rooms occupied by this family', 'Has this family a radio?', 'Place of birth of father', 'Place of birth of mother', 'Total earnings last 12 months', and a series of questions on schooling and literacy. The 1945 census also recorded 'Place of residence in 1935', 'Occupation in 1935', 'Weeks unemployed last year', 'Present rate of wages', 'Present rate of wages' per specified time period (i.e., per hour, per day, etc.), and a series of questions on tuberculosis and on schooling and literacy.

The organization of 'families' and 'dwellings' (i.e., households) in the censuses in Newfoundland, in line with the censuses of other countries, was based on heads of families and the relation of other individuals to the head. This organization was reflected both in the categories used in describing families (i.e., 'Head', 'Wife', 'Son', 'Daughter', 'Mother', etc.) and in the order they were placed on the census sheets ('Head' followed by 'Wife' followed by children ordered first by age and then by how integrated they were into the household, followed by other individuals, with servants and boarders almost always at the end/bottom). The order of individuals within a dwelling was maintained even when there was more than one family assigned to that dwelling (i.e., with a separate 'Head' for each family). In 1921 the most common (though only 19 out of 302 dwellings contained more than one family) relationship of the heads of the different 'families' was parents and sons (ten of the 19, all of whom were married, eight with children) with the sons and their families always listed after their parents, and in none of the cases were the two listed 'Heads' still living together in the next census. The same pattern applied in the 1935 census (16 of 273 dwellings having more than one family, all but three, married sons, the only case of households surviving with the same two 'Heads' was where a son seems to have separated from his wife and is still living with his father, though the son is no longer listed as head).

While such a classificatory scheme probably no longer reflects a social 'reality', it would seem to have reflected, at least the *official* relations of power within households (being defined locally, though not, in general, at odds with the definitions formulated at the national level). The enumerators of the 1921 and 1935 censuses were local individuals and members of the local dominant class (and linked to the national dominant class) and recorded the information in the manner called for in the censuses. Their recording of households is clearly named and ordered by the basic principles structuring social life and the relations of power (or at least of local, more or less, *official* power) within the family in Brigus: gender, age-generation, property ownership, marital status, and class (this listing does not indicate the hierarchy of generating structures, which in any case clearly was not straight forward). Probably the real social significance of 'headship' varied between households, in some cases reflecting actual and strongly 'patriarchal' intra-household relations while in others serving more as a concession to officially recognized power structures (while hiding the effective, more or less subversive, power relations operating within the household). Nonetheless, the consistency of patterns within and across censuses associated with the position of household head strongly suggests that the listing of an individual as the 'head' of a household fairly accurately represents that individual's social position (or at least their public position) within the household.

Where an elderly person was not listed as head (though, as detailed in Chapter 4, the majority were listed as heads or spouses of heads), most commonly the mother of the head, they were normally placed at the bottom of the household list, perhaps reflecting Pottle's (1979) characterization of, "'the old folks' who had spent much of their latter days apologetically in the dark corner of the kitchen, and were the last to be accounted for in the introduction of family members to a visitor" (p. 71).[2]

2. Problems with the census data

A problem arises, however, with the 1945 census. The enumerator for the 1945 census was not from Brigus or environs, though he was living there at the time, and his categorization was idiosyncratic (and at odds with that done by enumerators in other communities, who followed the pattern of previous censuses). Rather than classifying by relation to head he utilized the categories 'Father' (i.e., head), 'Mother' (i.e., wife), 'son', and 'daughter'; with all other members of a household classified as separate families (often with no classification at all, resulting in 'families' composed of a single child less than a year old). Despite this error on his part, it is possible to reconstruct the 1945 census on the principles it was supposed to have been done on and the principles it had been done on the previous censuses. The primary clue is the order of persons in the household generally repeated that found on previous censuses and because of this (and because the information from the previous censuses is also available) the individual who would have been listed as the head of the household would usually seem to have been listed first within a dwelling, other individuals, e.g., widowed mothers, servants, are listed in the same position (i.e., after the members of the nuclear family, with other relatives listed before non-relatives such as servants and boarders). In the few cases where the order of individuals seems at odds with the general household organization, and is at odds with what was found on the previous censuses (and this comprises only a couple of households) ownership of the dwelling can be used to determine 'headship' (and in all cases there were only two unrelated individuals in the household). For example, in the 1921 and 1935 censuses widows who were not listed as the head of the household were virtually always listed after the 'central' nuclear family of the dwelling whereas is in the 1945 census all of those widows would have been listed as a separate 'family'. In order to make use of the 1945 census the distinction between 'dwelling' (or, as will be used here, household) and 'family', found in the earlier two censuses,[3] cannot be used. Therefore, in all three censuses all persons within a single dwelling are treated as being members of one household. That this is a reasonable assumption to make can be found by looking at the percentage of age groups by marital status across all censuses. They are roughly equivalent; especially the percentage of widowed individuals listed as heads. However, the 1945 census is clearly less reliable than the previous censuses.

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[2] Pottle worked in the Commission of Government's Department of Public Health and Welfare and latter became Minister of the same in the Provincial Government in the 1950s, so his observations on this are probably more than just speculation.

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[3] In the first two censuses only 6% of the dwellings contained more than one 'family' and those dwellings with more than one show no obvious logic for such.

Another problem found across all three censuses relates to the confusion of missing data, non-applicable data, and actual zero values. Across all three censuses responses which did not have a positive value were almost always left blank. In many questions this is not a problem, if age, religion, marital status (for all of which there were very few cases left blank), etc., are left blank this clearly represents missing values. However, it is a problem in two main areas, occupations and earnings. For occupation and related questions (industry, other occupations, etc.), non-response for small children obviously represents non-applicable and non-response for wives the same (within the ethic of the time). However, many adult males of working age also have no response to this question (and it varies by age), so does this mean that the individuals had no occupation, i.e., were unemployed at the time, or is the blank space to be taken as missing data? In fact they clearly meant either at times (cross checking with other sources) but there is no obvious or practical way to separate them on the census. 'Unemployed' was only reported as an occupation once. However, most persons not reporting an occupation would seem to have not been working and the proportion of true non-responses (i.e., they were working but did not give a response) would seem to have been constant across all three censuses. In this study the data were examined both assuming that non-responses are true non-responses and that they represent persons not working. Where appropriate, the results of using these different assumptions are reported separately.

Earnings or income present the same sort of problem, but in some ways it was compounded. While the instructions to enumerators seem to have been lost, it would seem clear that 'earnings' refer only to job earnings and almost never report other income (though there were two cases where pension income seems to have been reported as earnings). If blank entries are taken to mean that the individuals had no income (as was clearly the case for children under ten) than in 1935 up to 23% of all households literally lived on nothing or entirely on savings (which would have been feasible for only a small part of the population), while in 1945 15% did so. Complete self-sufficiency was impossible in Newfoundland during the time, especially in a place like Brigus[4] and especially among those most often not reporting any earnings (the elderly and widows), so clearly these households had incomes. As will be discussed below, while government relief and other forms of support were limited in value, they were available and quite widely resorted to by some individuals and at certain times. In order to not exclude large numbers of individuals and households, in this study the data are examined both assuming that non-responses are true non-responses and that those not reporting any earnings were getting (from one source or another) at least the amount they were entitled to under the government support they were entitled to (as treating them as having no income is clearly unrealistic). The method by which this was done, following the government directions and reports on relief (discussed in more detail in Chapter 4), was to assume that every individual had an income at least equal to that they would get on casual relief and then add to that what ever support they might get to that by virtue of being aged, widowed, etc. However, individuals who clearly were receiving incomes (e.g., the Roman Catholic priest who had two servants who themselves had earnings of $300 and $500) are treated as missing values.

3. Nominal versus published censuses.

The basic demographic figures come from the first sheet in the nominal censuses and are found in Table 1 of the published version (Colonial Secretary's Office

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[4] In comparison to communities, such as on the west coast of the island or at Labrador, where household production was probably more important due to more available resources, lower population densities relative to those resources, and to the greater isolation of those communities.

[Newfoundland], 1923; Department of Public Health and Welfare [Newfoundland], 1937; Dominion Bureau of Statistics [Canada], 1949). The nominal census sheets were later bound together with a microfilm copy of them being the form generally accessible to researchers. Other information is found, in the published version of the censuses, in other tables which were taken down by enumerators on separate sheets. These other tables were probably bound separately; however, for most of Newfoundland, and Brigus in particular, these sheets have been lost as have the nominal censuses from before 1921.

The relationship between the published censuses, which has been extensively used by historians and other social scientists, and the nominal censuses, from which the former were derived, is not a simple one. Reconstructing the published censuses from the nominal census forms is, at best, difficult. For example, while the published census for 1921 lists 120 "Fishermen and others who cultivate land" for Brigus (under "No. Engaged in various professions, etc.", Colonial Secretary's Office [Newfoundland], 1923), no such figure, or even one close to it, can be produced from the nominal census. In the nominal census seven persons report their occupation as farmer while a further 14 reported farmer under "Other work". While the other tables (other than from the demographic record sheets) do not exist any longer for Brigus, examination of those from other communities indicates that there is nothing in them which would allow one to produce a figure any different from that produced by the first table alone. In fact it would appear that the those who put together the published census simply assumed that all fishermen cultivated land and further that no one else (including those who list their primary occupation as farmer) did. This comes from the fact that the number of "Fishermen and others who cultivate land" is virtually the same for each and all of the communities examined in this study as the number of males recorded as fishermen (and despite the fact that, probably, most of the gardening undertaken by fishermen, especially those involved in the Labrador fishery, was actually done by their wives and children). It might have been true that virtually all fishermen were farmers, if the extent of cultivation be ignored, as the vast majority of people had some sort of kitchen garden, but this applied to all of the community, only a minority of whom were fishermen. Further, of those who listed farming under "Other work" (n = 14) less than half (n = 6) listed their primary occupation as fishermen.

Another example of the problematic relation between the published censuses and their nominal sources is found in the recording of women's occupations. It is clear from a detailed comparison of the two versions of the 1921 census that women working as domestics and charwomen (the most commonly recorded women's occupation in the nominal census, with 14 and 2 recorded respectively for Brigus proper) and listing as such in the nominal returns, under "No. Engaged in various professions, etc.", were not part of the "Otherwise employed", or any other category (some were also listed as domestics or servants on the relation to head of household category only, six in all for Brigus proper). At the same time there were 51 women listed under "No. of Females engaged in Curing fish", yet in the nominal census not a single women lists fishing, fish curing, or anything like that under either primary or secondary occupation. The number of men listed as fishermen on the nominal census (n = 123) is close enough to that on the published version (n = 120) that the figure recorded in Table 1 would appear to be the source of the figure for men. There is nothing on the few (albeit not from Brigus) remaining copies of the other tables suggesting that the figures were derived from them. In the 1935 and 1945 census the "No. of Females engaged in Curing fish" corresponds to the numbers found on the nominal census, as do the number of "Males engaged in catching and curing fish".

In sum, the method by which the published Newfoundland censuses were compiled is opaque. In any case, the published census are far less useful than the primarily self-generated replies recorded on the nominal census forms: therefore the nominal census results will be used here, other than for general population figures.

4. Preparation and Coding of the Census Data

The data from the nominal censuses were coded using the categories on the census sheets and entered in machine readable form. Modern statistical packages (like SPSS for Windows/Mac) display the data, if it is properly coded, in a form which almost exactly reproduces the original census forms (set up as they are in rows of cases and columns of variables, see Appendix A), allowing one to use the data in the same sort of way one could with the original censuses (actually in some respects more easily as the available versions of the nominal census are all on mirco-film).

Individuals were given identification numbers so that they could be identified across censuses, as names, especially in the case of women, are too variable to allow practical computer searches. It cannot be known how many individuals could not be linked across censuses, as some individuals who appeared on succeeding censuses had moved into the community. However, on the 1935 census there were only 176 individuals (120 women and 56 men, many of whom clearly had moved into or back to the community) who were old enough to have been on the 1921 who were not identified out of 881 individuals of the appropriate ages. In the 1945 census there were 159 individuals (46 men and 113 women) whom it should have been possible to identify across censuses, but were not, out of an appropriate population of 654. Most linkages were straight foreword; however, the interviews with the informants cleared up many uncertainties.

As there were no street addresses in Brigus during the period of study and as dwelling numbers were not the same across censuses, dwellings cannot be identified across censuses. However, a 'qualitative' examination of the data on the dwelling allows one to make a reasonable guess in many cases that an individual is in the same dwelling as in the previous census. Again, the interviews with the informants cleared up some uncertainties.

Each census was reconstructed making the household, i.e., the dwelling on the census (being the combination of dwelling number and community number), the unit of analysis with the key variables (age, sex, occupation, etc.) becoming variables of the household but still identifiable by individuals. Variables appropriate to households were then assigned to these households which included the number of people in the household, the number of individuals listing an occupation in the household, the combined earnings of the household, the number of rooms in the household, and the household type.

The household type is a key variable and is based on the scheme found in Smith (1986) but expanded to include the presence of grandchildren in the household. The reason for this variable was to see if the elderly lived in multi-generational extended families. Household type measures with whom the elderly were living with and initially this was a variable assigned to the household itself. Eight household types based on whom the elderly were living with, were defined as follows:

1. 'Alone or spouse only': Included in this category were individuals over 64 years, either living by themselves or with a spouse. Domestic servants (usually only one) or boarders may have also been present. Domestic servants are not included in the classification because domestic servitude was virtually never a life long status (the only exception to this were priests' housekeepers); instead domestic servants were virtually always young women who almost never stayed in service past age 30 and never after marriage. Boarders were not that common and the very few long term 'boarders' seem not to have been listed as such.
2. 'Unmarried children': Included in this category were individuals over 64 years, either living by themselves or with a spouse, together with single (i.e., never married) children. Domestic servants, boarders, other relatives (but not including grandchildren or married children), or non-relatives may also have been present but the latter three almost never were.
3. 'Ever-married children': Included in this category were individuals over 64 years, either living by themselves or with a spouse together with their married and

widowed children. Domestic servants, boarders, other relatives (though rarely), non-relatives (rarely, but not including grandchildren), or unmarried children (commonly) may also have been present. Children-in-law are treated as children.

4. Unmarried children and grandchildren: Included in this category were individuals over 64 years, either living by themselves or with a spouse together with both unmarried children and grandchildren. Domestic servants, boarders, other relatives (though rarely), or non-relatives (rarely) may also have been present. Whether the children were the parents of the grandchildren often cannot be determined.

5. Ever married children and grandchildren: Included in this category were individuals over 64 years, either living by themselves or with a spouse together with both married children and grandchildren. Domestic servants, boarders, other relatives (though rarely), non-relatives (rarely), or unmarried children (commonly) may also have been present. Again, whether the children were the parents of the grandchildren can sometimes not be determined.

6. Other relatives: Included in this category were individuals over 64 years, either living by themselves or with a spouse together with other relatives (than children or grandchildren), most commonly siblings. Domestic servants, boarders, or non-relatives (but almost never were) could also be present.

7. Non-relatives only: Included in this category were individuals over 64 years, either living by themselves or with a spouse together with non-related persons. Domestic servants or boarders may have also been present. An elderly individual living as a boarder would be included here.

8. Grandchildren (but no children): Included in this category were individuals over 64 years, either living by themselves or with a spouse together with grandchildren, however children were not present in the household. Domestic servants could also

be present; other relatives or non-relatives in principle could also be present but almost never were.

However, in a number of cases there were two or more elderly individuals or an elderly individual and an elderly couple (an elderly couple being defined as any married, and all were listed as such, couple in which at least one individual was over 64 years of age) living in the same household; therefore, a single household classification would not match all the elderly individuals in the house. In these instances the household type variable was reapplied to the data in which the individuals were the unit of analysis and in the cases where there was more than one elderly individual or one elderly individual and an elderly couple, the household types were recoded manually. At the same time household incomes and the number listing an occupation were also reapplied to the individual data. The individual data file became the data used in the analysis (of course keeping in mind at all times the household nature of the data).

B. The Interviews

Unlike most areas where research on the history of the status of the aged has taken place (Anderson, 1972; 1977; Berkner, 1972; Braun, 1966; Chudacoff & Hareven, 1978; Quadagno, 1982), for most of Newfoundland that period commonly identified as either *traditional* or *early modern* [5]is within the memory of living informants. Therefore, in the proposed design of this research oral history was envisioned as a central part of the research design. Previous research in the community (Lewis, 1988) on the Labrador fishery and covering the same time period suggested that oral historical sources would be very useful. However, the interviews proved considerably less useful than for the purposes expected which was to provide information on the status of the aged during the period of study. It was not that people did not want to be interviewed as a number readily agreed, but rather that the subject of the elderly from the time when these elderly informants were young was not of central importance to the informants. As one informant put it:

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[5] Roughly the period when socio^economic relations were capitalist and where significant social welfare legislation, in particular old age pensions and mandatory retirement, had not been implemented.

> Now I don't know. I was very young and that sort of thing didn't, you know, didn't mean very much to me, except that old lady living alone and she was very, very poor.

While questions were asked about the aged, especially specific aged individuals, the interviews were not structured; rather, the course of the interviews was determined as informants moved on to topics of greater importance to them.

Despite the limitations in the oral history part of the research process, the interviews did go far towards adding detail to the written historical sources and, especially, to the nominal census, making links between the different censuses, clarifying uncertain or ambiguous information, and explaining what was meant by certain entries. In this way the interviews contributed a great deal towards greater reliability in using and coding the census data.

The selection of potential informants was done on a non-systematic basis. Some informants were contacted through the head of the local historical society, others were individuals who had been interviewed in my previous research in the community (Lewis, 1988), finally, some contacts were made by entirely fortuitous means, e.g., via relations and acquaintances.

Sixteen individuals, 10 men and 6 women, in total were contacted and thirteen were interviewed while three declined for unspecified reasons. Two of those who agreed to be interviewed wished to remain anonymous so their interviews were not audiotaped. The remaining interviews were audiotaped and relevant sections of the interviews were transcribed. All but two interviews were conducted in the informants' homes. Two were conducted in informants' offices.

C. The 'Historical' Sources

1. Autobiographical sources

One of the main reasons Brigus was chosen as the community of study is that a number of autobiographies were written by people from the community during the 1920s and 1930s. The most famous of these are the works of the arctic explorer Bob Bartlett (1936; c. 1930; 1928; 1929; 1934). However, most of Bartlett's writings are on his arctic explorations and, it would seem, even when he wrote on Brigus only small amounts of that made it past his editors. Considerably less famous, but far more useful for a social history of Brigus, is Nicholas Smith's (1936) *Fifty-two years at the Labrador fishery*, described by Harold Innis (1954), as an "invaluable account" (p. 495) of the fishery, and the only detailed account of the Labrador fishery and an outport community written by a participant in both from before the Second World War.

2. Archival records

An attempt was made to examine all records dealing with old age pensions, poor relief, and the aged in general, available from the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (which should be all records of such that are still available).

The Department of Finance handled the Newfoundland Old Age Pension and the letter book of the Old Age Pension account for the years 1916 through 1919 exist. This letter book, with outgoing correspondence of the Old Age Pension clerk (being the total administration of the system), gives a partial picture of the workings of the Newfoundland Old Age Pension (Newfoundland Department of Finance, 1916-1919). The Department of Finance also oversaw spending of other Departments especially during the period of the Commission of Government (discussed in more detail in later chapters), and their Dept of Finance letters, memoranda, etc., found in the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador GN38/S7 series were examined in detail.

The records of the Department of Public Welfare were also examined, in particular a collection of the welfare records of those applying for a Canadian Old Age Pension in the period from April 1949 through 1951, which included records going back to the 1920s (Newfoundland Department of Public Welfare, 1949).

The Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare (which existed during the Commission of Government and which dealt with relief and with 'Widows' Pensions') records were also examined in detail and are found in the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador GN 38/S6 collection. These records are composed mostly of letters, memoranda, bulletins, etc., from these departments to individuals and to other branches of the government. The records from the Departments of Public Charities and of Public Welfare, which were absorbed in the Department of Public Health and Welfare during the period of the Commission of Government, were also examined, however, those records are incomplete, and virtually nothing exists for the period before the First World War.

Magistrate's Court Northern District records were also examined for the years from 1908 through 1949; although these are also incomplete. The court was based in Brigus until sometime between 1928 and 1930 when it was moved to Holyrood, though it continued to hold court at Brigus all through this period. These include handwritten Minutes (GN 5/3/B/1), Process books (GN 5/3/B/2) and Complaints (GN 5/3/B/5) which, despite being extremely difficult to decipher, proved very useful. Selected other documents from the Department of Justice and Defence were examined (GN 38/S4 collection).

Finally documents from the Governor's Office (GN 1 collection) and the Colonial Secretary's Office (GN 2 collection) were examined, when reference was made to them in documents from other sources or when the catalogue of their contents suggested that they might be of interest.[6]

Other primary historical sources (Royal Commissions, reports to the Newfoundland House of Assembly and Legislative Council, proceedings from the same, and other government documents) found in the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Public Archives of Canada (Ottawa), the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and the Gosling Memorial Library (St. John's) were also examined on a less systematic basis, generally being sought out when they were cited elsewhere.

III. Ethical Considerations

Although the research was based primarily on written historical materials which are open to the general public through the different public archives in St. John's and Ottawa, ethical approval was required to conduct interviews with the informants for the oral history portion of the research. The proposal was submitted to and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Sociology of the University of Alberta.

An informed consent was drawn up for the participants (see Appendix B). First contact with all participants was first made by telephone and a general explanation of the purpose of the research was given. If the potential informant agreed to an interview during that phone contact then at the interview, each person being interviewed was given a detailed explanation of the purpose of the research and was asked to sign the consent form. Participants were given the option of not answering any questions they did not want to and withdrawing from the study at any time.

Names are not used herein except where they are part of the existent written documents which were originally intended to be public, e.g., court records, published books, or when they make reference to publicly acknowledged information (e.g., the family names of prominent families or public figures such as politicians). As information about individuals found in the nominal censuses was also obtained from interviews, individuals are not identified by name in discussions of the censuses except when it is being used in tandem with publicly available written documents in which names are an integral part of the record and the events recorded in documents were intended to be available to the public (and this only happens in three instances).

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[6] These are the best catalogued collections.

A pseudonym has not been used for Brigus. The use of a pseudonym for the community being studied has often been used as an attempt to maintain anonymity both of the community as a whole and of individuals (e.g., Faris 1972). A pseudonym for the community was not used in this research as the anonymity of both the community would be almost entirely illusionary and because previous research which I have done in the community (Lewis 1988) has shown that it is not desired.

In the case of Brigus the existence of a relatively rich written record of the community and some relatively famous people coming from the community mean that an examination of the bibliography would make evident which community was being written about. Even without such a record, however, attempts to keep the names of communities (and to a great extent the names of individuals) anonymous is virtually impossible in places like Newfoundland. Anyone with even a slight knowledge of the area or of Newfoundland history could easily determine the community of study.

CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS: A PORTRAIT OF THE ELDERLY IN BRIGUS, 1920-1949

If Newfoundland were a 'traditional' then GMT would argue that we should expect to find most of the elderly living, at least where possible, within the extended multi-generational household/family. Independently of GMT, the modernization paradigm which has dominated Newfoundland social and historical theorizing has, argued that "patrilocal and patricentric extended family" was one of the defining characteristics of 'traditional' Newfoundland (Queen & Habenstein, 1974, p. 383). The most important feature of both the GMT extended family and the Newfoundland "patrilocal and patricentric extended family" was that the extended family was the sight of both production and of social reproduction. A defining characteristic of this feature for the elderly was that those social welfare functions which are primarily the responsibility of the collectivity in 'modern' societies were primarily the responsibility of the extended family. While no real historical work has been done to date on the elderly in Newfoundland and there has been no detailed or specific claims by the proponents of GMT as to whether Newfoundland was the sort of traditional society posited by them, it would have seemed to be assumed to have been by those who have made passing reference to the situation of the elderly (e.g., Queen & Habenstein, 1974, p. 383).

This chapter has two overall goals: 1) to describe, as far as the historical sources allow, the situation of the elderly in Brigus in the period from 1920-1949; and 2) to examine whether or not the elderly lived in and were supported by extended nuclear family households. The findings obtained from a detailed examination of the nominal censuses, interviews, and historical records are presented in this chapter. The chapter begins with a general description of the population of Brigus and environs. This is followed by an examination of the economic activities of the elderly, with special emphasis on the question of work versus retirement among the elderly. This is followed in turn by an examination of whether and to what extent the elderly received support from the collectivity, through an exploration of social welfare provisions and an estimation of the incomes of the elderly. Finally a detailed examination is made of the living arrangements of the elderly and the household structures in which they lived. A central question to be addressed in this section is, were most elderly living within extended multi-generational households/families when this was possible or were most living within some other type of household? Of special importance to this is to examine the households of the aged across the three censuses in order to determine how those households changed over time and to ensure that the snapshot of households provided by census data does not obscure the sort of longer term patterns which Berkner (1975) claims they do.

I. Setting

Brigus is a community on Conception Bay in the electoral district of Port-de-Grave which is on the Avalon Peninsula located on the southeast corner of the Island of Newfoundland. The Avalon Peninsula, and Conception Bay in particular, during the period under investigation was the area of the highest population density in the Province, as it had been previously and continues to be. It was also the area where the earliest permanent settlement attempts by Europeans took place and the centre and point of origin for the establishment of year-round European occupation of much of the rest of the island. Brigus itself was probably first occupied year-round sometime around 1650, though it may have been occupied during the summer since at least the beginning of the seventeenth century. However, Brigus only became a significant centre of population with the rise of the seal fishery and the summer cod fishery carried out on the coast of Labrador at the very end of the eighteenth century. While fishing was the traditional basis of the economy, today the local fish plant is essentially closed down and there is virtually no commercial fishing out of Brigus.

From the standpoint of the codfishery Brigus is not a particularly well situated settlement. It is not located close to especially rich fishing grounds, as were other Conception Bay communities such as Bay-de-Verde and Port-de-Grave. Neither is Brigus a particularly large or protected harbour, like Harbour Grace or St. John's. Brigus's harbour is quite open and has a wide mouth. While there is a protected inner harbour, the *Harbour Pond*, it is small and its entrance is narrow, limiting its use to small vessels. The main harbour at Brigus is open to north and east winds and is exposed to storms from those directions. Formerly, vessels using the harbour would run to more secure harbours when storms from those directions threatened. Deep water runs right to the cliffs which surround much of the harbour and as a result water frontage has always been limited at Brigus. One of the historic landmarks of the community is a tunnel drilled through the rock to the water front which was built in the nineteenth century in order to increase the usable waterfront. The nature of the harbour at Brigus results in a less than ideal harbour for many purposes and Brigus was an unlikely centre either for fishing or for trade. However, the nature of the harbour also results in little ice being held to the shore there in the spring and what ice does form is usually broken up by ocean swells and cleared out by westerly winds. This characteristic of the harbour was important for the spring seal fishery which developed at the end of the eighteenth century and was central to the economy of Brigus.

In many respects Brigus was the prototypical Conception Bay community, being a site of rather tenuous year-round settlement from the latter part of the seventeenth century, one of the early sites of the rapid growth of the district in the beginning of the nineteenth century, and being one the communities first and most strongly marked by the decline in population and the economy which characterized the district towards the end of the century.[1]

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[1] This is discussed in detail in the following chapters.

II. Population of Brigus and Environs

Brigus reached its maximum size sometime shortly before 1884, when the population of Brigus was reported as being 2,365 (see Table 3.1). After that date Brigus began a fairly rapid decline in population which continued up through the Confederation of Newfoundland with Canada in 1949. The population of the community in the period of the focus of the study was 936 in 1921, 886 in 1935, and 888 in 1945.[2] The 1991 population of Brigus was 929 people, up from a low point of 704 in 1961.

By 1921 the population of Brigus had been in decline for about forty years. The period from 1880 to 1945 is marked by a rapid decline in the population of both Brigus and the surrounding smaller communities and a corresponding decline in economic activity and prosperity of the community. The population of Brigus and environs probably peaked about the year 1880 at approximately 2,500 for Brigus proper and approximately 3,000 for the larger area (see Table 3.1). Between the 1884 census and that of 1891 the population dropped from 2,365 to 1,541, representing an annual per capita decrease in population of almost five per cent; a rate which, if it had continued, would have seen the population halve every 14 years. The population continued to decrease after that, though at a less precipitous rate, reaching 936 in 1921. This represented an annual, per capita decrease between 1911 and 1921 of close to one per cent. The population of Brigus continued to decrease in the 1920s.

While the rate of population decline appeared to have levelled off after circa 1930 for Brigus proper, the population of the area in general continued to decline. To a great extent the apparent levelling off in the decline in the population of Brigus proper was the result of the unorganized resettlement of people from some of the surrounding small communities to Brigus, in particular the communities of Bull Cove and Grebe's Nest which disappeared in this period. The Depression of the 1930s also had an effect on the population. Brigus natives, who had emigrated to other areas of Newfoundland, Canada, and the United States during better economic times there, were forced to return home due to the growing unemployment in those areas. Younger age groups in Brigus, who probably would have emigrated previously, found economic prospects on the mainland limited and remained in Brigus. The population remained more or less stable between 1935 and 1945, with the Newfoundland economy improving due to military spending associated with the Second World War. With the end of wartime prosperity the population of Brigus continued to decrease, bottoming out around the year 1960.

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[2] The area studied, particularly in terms of the census data, includes some adjacent communities which were closely economically, socially, and culturally linked to Brigus proper.

III. The Demographic Profile of the Aged in Brigus

One of the theses of GMT is that the aged were relatively rare in traditional societies and that their rarity was one of the reasons for their relatively high status. In contrast to this contention, the elderly were far from rare in Brigus in the period under study. One informant described Brigus as a town of old people during the summer, when much of the population was involved in migratory labour at the Labrador fishery and in other areas of Newfoundland. In 1921 those 65 and over made up 9.7% of the total population of Brigus (see Table 3.2 and Figure 3.1). This made Brigus very much a mature community. In comparison in 1986, for Newfoundland as a whole, 8.8% of the population was 65 years old and older, a figure attained in Brigus before 1911, and 9.7% were in 1991. Meanwhile for Brigus in 1991, 15.0% of the population was 65 years old and older. In 1921 those 65 and older made up 4.8% of the Canadian population (which of course did not include Newfoundland).

In 1935 those 65 and over made up 10.9% of the total population of Brigus and environs (see Figure 3.2), while they constituted 9.3% of the population in 1945 (see Figure 3.3), the Canadian figures for the same years were 6.0% and 7.1% respectively.

Canada did not reach the demographic maturity of Brigus until the early 1980s. The relatively high proportion of aged in Brigus is explained by the long history of emigration from the community.

Individuals 65 years and older in 1921 would have been born during the period of Brigus's prosperity (i.e., c. 1855) and they would have reached adulthood at about the time that the population of the community had started to decline rapidly. Continuing high rates of emigration since then made for a population age structure more like modern Canada than a *traditional* society.

IV. The Relative Economic Situation of the Elderly

One of the central arguments of GMT is that the exclusion of the elderly from productive activity, as an aspect and the goal of both government support of the elderly and mandatory retirement, was a central aspect of the modernization process. The two main measures of the economic situation and the productive activities of the elderly in the censuses are occupations and earnings. The former measure is found in all three censuses while the latter is only in 1935 and 1945.

A. Work and Retirement Among those 65 Years of Age and Older

The only measures resembling labour force participation rates and retirement, taken across all of the censuses are 'Personal occupation' or 'Primary occupation'. In 1921 a secondary occupation was also given. The Newfoundland classification is probably roughly equivalent to 'Gainful occupation' in the United States censuses prior to 1890.[3] Like the U.S. census, the Newfoundland census presumably under-enumerated women's occupations (Ransom & Sutch, 1986). Evidence for this can be found in the case of domestic servants, all women, whose occupation was only recorded under their relationship to the head of the household rather than under their occupation, although it clearly was their occupation. More tenuous evidence is found in the case of those keeping boarders. In none of the households in Brigus with boarders in 1921 did the female head or the wife of the head list themselves as a boarding house keeper. However, in only one of those household was there more than one boarder and there were two unmarried men with boarders and neither listed this as their occupation despite not listing any others.

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[3] For a discussion of the problem of interpreting the census categories in the U.S. censuses see, Ransom and Sutch (1986).

1. Retirement Among the 65 and Over

Today retirement is seen as a normal part of life and the normal condition of those over 64 years of age. That it is so is highlighted by labelling retirement before age 65 as 'early retirement'. The vast majority of those 65 and older in Brigus, Newfoundland, Canada, or the United States today would describe themselves as being 'retired.' This was not the case in Brigus in the 1920s and 1930s, though this seems to have changed in the 1940s.

On the 1921 census only one person 65 years and older reported being anything like 'retired' and could be classified as 'retired' in the narrow sense of the term, a 71 year old man listing his personal occupation as "Private income". If we assume a wider definition, that those over 64 years old not reporting an occupation were essentially retired, then 37% of the men over 64 were 'retired' (see Table 3.3). However, those without a reported occupation on the census would clearly have also have included those for whom the lack of response represents missing data. While men over 64 were more likely than younger men to not report an occupation, significant numbers of men between 16 and 64 (excluding those at school) also did not report an occupation. The non-reporting rate in 1921 was 28% for men 65 year of age and older and 7% for those 16-64 years of age. In the 1921 census no women were listed as 'retired' or fit the narrow definition of retired. Meanwhile the wider definition of retirement is clearly inapplicable to women where, on both sides of age 65, and the vast majority (97% of those 65 and older and 88% of those 16 through 64) listed nothing under 'occupation'.

In the 1935 census there was a small increase in the number of persons, still all males, describing themselves as in one sense or another 'retired'; two men described themselves as "pensioners" (this probably referred to pensions other than the Newfoundland Old Age Pension, discussed below), while two others described themselves as "retired", one as a "Retired U.C. Clergyman" the other as a "Retired collector of H. M. customs". These represent just under 9% of males 65 years and older. Again, if we assume that those over 64 years old not reporting an occupation were essentially retired, then 44% were 'retired', as 38% did not report an occupation. However the non-reporting of occupation had risen to 26% of males 16 through 64 and so much of the increase in those 'retired' under the wider definition probably represents unemployment due to the depression rather than 'retirement' in its modern sense. No women reported being 'retired', though one 63 year old widow reported "Private income" as her occupation. Once again the vast majority of women, 98% of those 65 and older and 87% of those 16 through 64, listed no occupation.

In the 1945 census there was a virtual explosion in the number of men labelling themselves as retired. Thirty-nine men over 65 years and older described themselves explicitly as "retired"; 65% of the men in this age category. In the same census another man, a 68 year old former merchant, gave his occupation as a "Gentleman" (interviews have made it clear that he was 'retired'), and another, aged 66, gave his occupation as "Invalid"; with these latter individuals included, 73% would have been 'retired'. Once again, if we assume that those not reporting an occupation were essentially retired, 14% of men over 64 years old and 7% of those 16-64, then three quarters of the males over 65 were in the modern sense *retired.*

Three women listed their occupation as 'retired' in 1945, all of who were unmarried. One of the retired women had listed her occupation as teacher in 1921, however, in 1935, when she was 71 years old she did not report an occupation, though she would have been as 'retired' as she was in 1945. Her brother, also single, a teacher in 1921, and living in the same household, also did not report an occupation or being retired in 1935 (when he was 68); he was not on the 1945 census.

2. Work among those 65 and over

Labour force participation was not uncommon among those 65 and over in 1921 but appears to have decreased over the study period. It decreased most among men 75 years and over between the 1935 and 1945 census, with no one over 75 listing an occupation on the latter census.

In the 1921 census over 80% of males between 65 and 69 years of age listed themselves as having some occupation, as compared to just over 90% of those 16 to 65 years of age (see Table 3.3). Even among those from 70 to 74 years of age and those 75 and over, 50% reported a 'primary occupation'. Overall, 63% of men over 64 reported having an occupation, though, as there were no listing of incomes their level of activity in these occupations cannot be known.

While comparable figures for the rest of Newfoundland are not available, nor are Canadian figures, Ransom and Sutch (1986), using the nominal or manuscript census, report that just over 66% of men over 60 years of age were in the labour force in 1900 in the United States and that this figure stayed essentially the same through at least 1930. The comparable figure for Brigus in 1921, 63%, is remarkably close to the U.S. Figure. As Figure 3.4 shows,[4] most men entered the labour force by age 16 or 17 and most remained in the labour force until well into their seventies. Again, the figures are similar to those from the United States (Ransom & Sutch, 1986).

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[4] Figures 3.4 and 3.5 are floating ten year age averages (because the raw figures of percentage of individuals in the labour force are too variable for a readable graph) except where the percentage is consistently zero, e.g., under age 16 and above age 83 for 1921 for males.

Older men were found in a fairly full range of occupations in the 1921 census (see Table 3.4). While those over 64 years of age are not found in certain occupations, e.g., miners and woods workers, none of those occupations were widespread in the community. In fact, the mines and the saw mills referred to were not in the community and the absence of older men might be related to the fact that most of the men working in both occupations were unmarried. Twenty nine percent of miners and woods workers were married or widowed, whereas, 71% of the working men overall were; so married men were perhaps more likely to move to the mining and woods towns on a permanent basis. However, it might be at least partly a cohort effect (as the mine at Bell Island had only opened in 1895 and the pulp mill at Grand Falls in 1905); alternatively, it might be that older men were excluded from that type of work, or it might be a chance fluctuation. There were other occupations with no men over 64 years in them, but the overall numbers listed in these occupations are so small that it is difficult to make any interpretation, especially as some of those occupation had men over 64 in them in the 1935 census (see Table 3.4).

The 'labour force participation' of women was markedly different from that of men. Very few women 65 years of age and older were in the paid labour force (see Table 3.3 and *Figure* 3.5). In fact very few women over 25 years of age listed an occupation in the 1921 census and only two married women did, representing just 4% of the women listing occupations (see Table 3.5). Far and away the most common listed occupation, sometimes listed only under the heading of 'relationship to head of household' rather than under 'occupation', was in domestic service, with 57% of the women listing a occupation being either 'domestics' ($\underline{n}$ = 21), 'servants' ($\underline{n}$ = 6), or 'charwomen' ($\underline{n}$ = 2). These were generally young women, (average 22 years, mode 16 years) and all but one (who was widowed) were single. The other occupations which unmarried women occupied were teachers ($\underline{n}$ = 12) and sales ladies ($\underline{n}$ = 9). The two women 65 years of age and older who listed an occupation were a 68 year old single women working as a servant and a 70 year old, unmarried dressmaker.

For the 1935 census there were no fundamental changes in the age graded labour force participation rates among men. While there was a decrease in the proportion of men 65 years old and older who were in the labour force in 1935 (from 63% to 57%), there was also a decrease in the proportion of men under 65 who were not in the labour force. This decrease can probably be explained by the effects of the economic depression of the period. There was a drop in labour force participation rates for men under 65 years of age (see Table 3.3) and there was an even larger drop in labour force participation among those under 20 years of age (see Figure 3.4). There was an increase in the numbers of men listing themselves as farmers, a pattern found during the other economic depressions in Newfoundland's history (see Crabb, 1975, pp. 92-106). There seems to have been a real increase in the number of elderly men, relative to younger men, listing themselves as farmers and a relative decrease in the number listing themselves as fishermen. Perhaps as marginal workers in the fishery the elderly were pushed out of it and into farming with the severe depression which hit the fishery in the 1930s, though it could also be that older men were more likely to have the property which allowed them to be farmers.

Similarly, there were no fundamental changes in the age graded labour force participation rates among women in 1935. As in 1921, only a tiny minority of elderly or married women of any age, listed an occupation (see Table 3.5). Among young single women domestic service continued to be the dominant occupation listed by women, though even among young single women, only a small minority listed any occupation.

For the 1945 census there is what would at least appear to be a fundamental change in the age graded labour force participation rates of both men and women. Only 25% (n = 15) of men over 64 listed an occupation in 1945, less that half of what it had been in the previous censuses. Among men over 64, 37 of 58 household heads listed themselves as retired. Of the fifteen men over 64 who listed an occupation—other than retired or an equivalent—nine were 65 or 66 years of age and only two were over 69. The few over 64 year olds working were confined to a fairly limited range of occupations—almost 90% being either labourers, fishermen, or farmers—whereas in previous censuses those over 64 had been found in a fairly wide range of occupations (see Table 3.4). While the change in labour force participation rates might have been an artifact of the method of census taking, it is paralleled by changes in income, discussed in the next section, suggesting that is not the total explanation.

The age graded labour force participation rates among women did not change dramatically in 1945. While no women over 64 years of age listed an occupation, very few elderly women had done so on the previous censuses either (see Table 3.5). Among younger women the numbers in domestic service dropped dramatically, going from the occupation of almost half of the women listing occupations on the 1921 and 1935 censuses to just 12% of those in the 1945 census. The explanation of this is simpler. Young women had entered domestic service due to poverty; families found each extra mouth to feed a significant burden on household economies and this was probably more important than what ever cash wages they might send home. The increase in prosperity during the war meant that far fewer families found themselves so poor as to feel the necessity to send their daughters into domestic service.

The reason for the decline in the labour force participation rates for men over 65 is far from clear. As is discussed below there were no major changes in the direction of greater numbers or rates of pensions for the elderly, in fact there was a relative reduction in the rates paid out. The war and military base construction caused a shift in the occupational structure of the community.[5] Traditionally fishing and farming had been the dominant and complementary occupations and had been the occupations of last resort—to be depended on when other occupations failed. When the fishery was prosperous people slackened their efforts in farming and when the fishery was depressed people shifted their efforts into farming (Crabb, 1975). Of the men employed in 1921, 51% worked in fishing and farming, 48% in fishing and 3% in farming, during a period of reasonably good fish prices. In 1935, when the cod fishery was extremely depressed, 55% worked in those two occupations, 46% in fishing and 9% farming (see Table 3.4). In 1921 both the aged and the younger male workers were similarly employed in fishing and farming (under 65 with 47% in fishing and 3% in farming, over 64 with 50% in fishing and 3% in farming). In 1935, while the total in fishing and farming were similar for older and younger male workers (55% and 56% respectively), the mix of the two was different for younger and older workers with a higher proportion of older male workers listing themselves as farmers than did younger (under 65, 48% fishing, 7% farming; over 64, 31% fishing, 26%, farming). In 1945 the number of men listed as fishermen and as farmers for all ages dropped dramatically, going to 28% of the male labour force with 23% in fishing and 5% in farming, while the numbers listed as labourers and in the constructions trades, occupations linked to military base construction, increased. A few men over 64 continued to work in fishing and farming though in smaller numbers than previously. Older men were not well represented in the growth occupations, labouring and construction.

While the pattern of new occupations being filled by younger workers is common enough (e.g., Quadagno, 1982, pp. 154-155), why so few older men were involved in the traditional occupations is unclear. During the war the Commission of Government made

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[5] Work outside of the community had been a normal aspect of the Brigus economy virtually from its foundation, in particular fishing at Labrador, though other sorts of migratory work was also common.

65 the age of retirement for civil servants (Newfoundland Department of Finance, 1945), where previously there had been no fixed age of retirement and pensions had been given on an ad hoc basis. However, this would have had little effect on Brigus as only a very few individuals were civil servants and none of those over 64 in 1945 had previously been civil servants. Even if the government's policy on mandatory retirement was adopted by other employers (and there is no evidence that they did so), it would not explain the decline in the numbers of aged fishermen and farmers, occupations which even today have no mandatory retirement and which traditionally had served as the employment of last resort.

There is at least some evidence that aged men had always been, at least incipiently, marginal workers in the fishery. The fishery was an occupation within which many of the tasks, such as hauling a cod trap, involved substantial physical labour. Nicholas Smith (1936, p. 151) at least implies that the crew composed mostly of "old fellows" he employed during the First World War was not his ideal crew. Compensating for this it would seem that, at least during the 1920s, planters seem to have had difficulty in finding enough workers for the Labrador fishery. Robert Bartlett complained of difficulties in getting enough labourers for their fishing station at Labrador and blamed that for his families withdrawal from the fishery (Bartlett, 1934, pp. 7-8). In that labour market most older men were probably able to find work, even if younger men were preferred. However, in the 1930s fewer and fewer merchant firms were willing or able to supply for the fishery. Referring to the 1930s and 40s a former fish merchant recounted:

> He [J. W. Hiscock] said, 'I don't like it,' .... 'It's a dying business and,' he says, 'as much as I can see one year what the other there's a thousand dollars a year.' ... My father got sick and as I say he didn't get down and he wasn't down to Labrador after, so I more or less had to pick up things on my own and feel my way along, and there were many other suppliers down there, not many I suppose that's the problem but there was one (pause) two (pause) three (pause) four (pause) about five different suppliers down in that area that's the north side of Grosswater Bay, and they gradually dropped off one after the other and we were left there alone. (Lewis, 1984b)

With only a limited number of crews being able to get supplies for the fishery even a relatively small downturn in the economy, as was experienced in 1945, would have meant that the fishery would not have been able to absorb any number of labourers unable to find work elsewhere as it had in the past. Perhaps the best explanation for these changes then, at least for the fishery, is that they were, like the war based economic boom, short term economic dislocations which would have ended with the return to the traditional economy, however, Confederation meant that that did not happen.

V. Economic Conditions of the Aged

The economic condition of any group in a capitalist society is conditioned by the relative market earnings of the members of that group or, failing that, by support from the collectivity, formal or informal, be that the local community or the state. In many situations, such as in rural Newfoundland as well as in some decidedly urban areas (e.g., Bradbury, 1984), these supports are supplemented by whatever subsistence productive activity individuals are able to engage in.

A. Subsistence production.

Subsistence production for household use was important and doubtless was as important for the aged as it was for younger individuals. One characteristic of outport life was that home ownership was almost universal. Land cost virtually nothing and if one could not afford building materials they could often be produced by the builder. Most households had at least a kitchen garden and, though usually not listing themselves as farmers, many produced enough vegetables (root crops and cabbages) for their own consumption. For households involved in the Labrador fishery women did most of the gardening/farming as they did not generally go to Labrador unless they were unmarried daughters going as cooks:

> When you came home [from Labrador] in the fall your wife and your family, if you had any family, if you had no family, your wife was here, she'd have a cellar full of potatoes, turnips, cabbage, carrots. She'd have a

> loft, we called it, full of hay, that would be all put in, and, you know, then you'd have a sheep to kill or a lamb or a pig. Everybody had all this stuff, see, you know, you didn't want a big lot of money, all you wanted was a bit of money to get something to eat, to get a bit of flour or something like that, see. (Lewis, 1984a)

Despite the importance of subsistence agriculture, flour, dried beans, tea, sugar, and salt meat, "something to eat", were all central parts of the local diet which needed to be purchased as was kerosene, most clothing, tools and utensils, etc.

Fuel, for home heating, too was, to a great extent, produced locally, though many who could afford it bought coal. Both the elderly and younger individuals went back into the country to collect wood and heavy use of such meant that good wood was only found fairly distant from the community. As this activity took place in the winter, it did not conflict with summer work in the fishery or in labour associated with the fishery. As individuals aged many found the manual labour increasingly difficult. As one informant related it:

> And at one time when things were very, very tight a [aged] man would take his, what they called a little hand slide, and go in and they'd cut anything they could get, small alders, small birch, or small spruce trees, anything at all. And they would have to go in just about every day, and they'd try to get enough wood to see them over the weekend. And they had to do it pretty well every day. The odd one probably had a dog that was a help too.[6] (Lewis, 1993)

As individuals aged at least some would have found the often heavy manual labour involved in getting fire wood and gardening taxing and at least some had others work the land for them, often in exchange for the inheritance of the land after their death. Such maintenance agreements[7] were sometimes formalized by written agreements. All available examples of which involved non-relatives as a court case from the 1940s illustrates:

> About 24th Dec. 1940 I went out to my door & I smelled a nasty smoke around my door and I saw it was coming from Mrs. Fry's [age 76, widowed] chimney. I then went to her house and I found a bag of potato

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[6] Dogs were used to haul slides or sleds.

[7] See Snell (1992) for a discussion of similar sorts in Canada during the same period.

> stalks in the wood box by the stove. I asked her if that was what she was burning and she said 'yes.' I told her I had lots of wood. I then brought her three days of firewood. I asked her if she was going to depend on me and others to come in and take care of her. I then advised her to take some one in to live with her.
>
> She then asked me if I would live with her.... I brought more wood next day she then said to me 'to get Mr. Hearn' [the Crown Surveyor] to make over the property to me.... She then said to him that she did not want me to feed her for this property. She said all I want from him is firewood. (Magistrate's Court Northern District Holyrood, 1941)

The above was only one of a number of cases brought before the magistrate by these individuals against each other. Other, more successful instances involved elderly individuals, most often widows, taking in younger individuals or families to live with them in return for which their home was "given over on condition that he keep it in repair and give her lodging." (Newfoundland Department of Public Welfare, 1949, file #8211). Other domestic work doubtless was also of importance in these situations, especially hauling water, as public wells were the main source of water in Brigus until the 1950s.

The extant examples of this sort of written arrangement would seem to have involved childless widows; however, the court records suggest that such arrangements could also be worked out between parents and children. In two cases from 1941 and 1942 which came before the magistrate and concerned a continuing dispute over fences—a common reason for going before the magistrate—it would seem that property was handed over to a child, in this case a married daughter, in exchange for support (Magistrate's Court Northern District Holyrood, 1942; 1944). While it is not known if the 'deed' was as detailed and precise as in the case of Bridget Fry, it is clear that it was a written legal document with the daughter having been "given possession of the property there to me by deed" and it was recognized as such by the court (Magistrate's Court Northern District Holyrood, 1942).

B. Government support

As in many other jurisdictions, Newfoundland divided public support into that directed to the 'permanent poor' and that directed to the 'casual poor'. Newfoundland also had an Old Age Pension, specifically for the elderly, though not available to all aged individuals. There was also a 'Widows' Pension', 'Widows' Allowance', or 'Widow's Pay'. While "neither the rates nor the conditions under which they ['Widows' Pensions'] may be granted appear to have been defined by Statute, Order-in-Council, or even by Departmental Regulations" (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1935, p. 9), in practice they seem to have been available to virtually all widows and to some women who were not widows (e.g., women whose husbands were incapacitated or had disappeared or women who were never married), at least until the suppression of popularly elected government. Despite some current claims to the contrary, government support was a common part of life in pre-Confederation Newfoundland. Contrary to Snell (1993) and others, government support, at least in some of its forms, does not seem to have been considered particularly degrading, or at least not by large sections of the population, despite the wish by the government that more would find it so. For example, the Commissioner of Public Charities, H. J. Brownrigg, in his testimony to the Royal Commission on Health and Public Charities (1930) concerning the 'Widows' Pension' recounted replies to an earlier seemingly lost investigation:

> Apparently, the belief has grown up that Widows, by the very reason of their Widowhood, are entitled to what is sometimes called the 'Widow's Pay', or 'Widow's Pension'. Destitution is, of course, the only real cause for giving relief, and such destitution as will result in suffering or hardship, if the relief is not given.... One Relieving Officer reported that women "demand relief because they are widows." He cited a case of one young widow, who is in service, demanding her "allowance", and another of a widow who had gone to Grand Falls for two months and when she returned looked for her "pay". A second official stated that, while he revises his own [pauper] list he allows all Widows relief, as that was the practice. "I refuse no widows," states another Relieving Officer. "I understood any woman is entitled to the amount on her husband's death," comments another official. "I followed the old list. All widows regard the relief as

> their pension." "I give all widows something, following the old custom." "All widows expect the allowance." "I tried to take off lists widows who do not need the allowance but the Member [of the Newfoundland House of Assembly] interfered." "I accepted the old list and had to pay widow's salary because of political interference." "I accepted old lists because Members interfered when I took widows off." "All widows expect relief." "All widows expect something from the grant." (pp. 194-195)

In the debates concerning the Newfoundland Old Age Pension the government's and a seemingly more popular characterization than that advocated by Brownrigg of the 'Widows' Pension' is made explicitly:

> A great deal has also been said with regard to the neglect of the Government in not giving women a [Old Age] pension. Well, now, it may be information to the right hon. the Leader of the Opposition to know that the women of this Colony do not receive pauper relief at all. The widows receive a salary; it may be small, but it is not pauper relief. (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1911, p. 479)

These passages underline some of the dominant characteristics of the whole system of public relief in Newfoundland. First, and most importantly, the needy had a right to look to the collectivity, in (and only in) the form of the national government, for support and certain individual characteristics conferred, or helped to confer, the status of worthy needy, in this case widowhood. Second, is the clearly political nature of relief, in that those seeking relief did so, at least ultimately, through their elected representatives.[8] Third, is that the character of the politics of Newfoundland was highly personalized, explicit norms and regulations were far less important than were personal political contacts, often mediated by local elites. Finally, and closely related to the previous two points, the system lacked the rationality of modern bureaucratic systems; the system exhibited few of the explicit age or other norms which it has been argued characterize the 'modern' welfare state (Kertzer, 1995, p. 365).

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[8] Women had received the vote in 1925.

The conflict expressed in the above passages is over whether widowhood was sufficient in itself to confer the status of worthy needy. Some members of the civil service, with at least implicit support from certain sections of the population, argued that "destitution" was "the only real cause for giving relief". However, at least, the working class and their political representatives seemed to consider the 'Widows' Pension' a right for all widows. Whether this was because of a 'norm' that widowhood conferred the status of worthy needy or because of one that a pension should be supplied on the basis of widowhood alone the practical outcome of either belief was the same and deciding which 'norm' applied is probably impossible. In fact the question of which 'norm' applied probably implies a greater, and at the same time cruder, degree of precision in social accounting than was actually employed in specific social situations. Religion, community, political support, &c. all came into play in specific decisions about support and while general social 'norms' might be applied in general political debates or after-the-fact justifications, they should not be simply accepted as anything more than that.

It would seem that the Newfoundland Old Age Pension was similar in character to the Widow's Pension. In the debates in the Newfoundland House of Assembly around the establishment of the pension and later around changes to it, while there were disagreements about some aspects of the implementation of the legislation, there seems to have been general agreement that, "...where anyone, man or woman, having reached an advanced age ... where they have become dependent on charity, that it is the duty of the State to come forward to their support." (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1926, p. 980). Again it is not clear if it was having "reached an advanced age" which conferred the right to collective support or whether it was being "dependent on charity" (i.e., being poor) and again, I would argue, the distinction was not a practically meaningful one.

Clearly the Newfoundland Old Age Pension was not like the modern Canadian Old Age Security, representative of the 'modern welfare state', where support is paid to essentially all those over 64 years of age by virtue of age alone. By the same token its application by the Newfoundland government stands in stark contrast to that of the Ontario provincial government which only reluctantly joined in such a scheme in 1929 (despite only having to shoulder 25% of the costs) and which showed extreme parsimony, granting public pensions only to those who could demonstrate absolute poverty (Bryden, 1974; Orloff, 1993; Struthers, 1992).[9]

During different periods when the Newfoundland government was facing financial crises there were rumblings about strengthening the financial responsibility of children to support their aged parents, however, this never seems to have been enforced. Again this stands in contrast to the attitude of the Ontario provincial government which used existing filial responsibility laws to severely limit their old age pension responsibilities (Snell, 1990).

General pauper relief was also available, to men ineligible for the Old Age Pension and to women who were not widows—though some single women seem to have actually received the equivalent of the 'Widows' Pension'. As well casual relief, the 'dole' proper, was available to the aged on the same basis as to younger individuals and families, sometimes combined with the Old Age Pension or the 'Widows' Pension' (see Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1936b; Royal Commission on Health and Public Charities, 1930, p. 168). It would seem that 'pauper relief' and the 'dole' were generally seen differently than were the Old Age Pension and the 'Widows' Pension', at least by those in the governing class. While officials claimed at times that, "thousands of our people would rather die than have their names inscribed on the poor relief roll, and become what is termed 'paupers'" (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1911, p. 448) at other times they would complain that "People regard the Relief as a gift from the Government to which each and every one is justly entitled." (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1939b).

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[9] While the amount of a full Canadian old age pension was greater than that of Newfoundland, less than half of those receiving the pension in Ontario were given a full pension and only one in three of those over 70 (the age of eligibility) were deemed eligible by the needs criteria of the program (Struthers 1992, p. 245). In any case the standard of living differences which existed between Newfoundland and Ontario make direct comparison difficult.

The amounts provided by relief whether paid in cash—Old Age Pension and the 'Widows' Pension'—or kind—'dole'—were small by modern standards. But so, too, were the incomes of working people not receiving relief. While government relief and Old Age pensions could not provide individuals with a comfortable living, neither could the work much of the population depended on. Government support was absolutely necessary for large sections of the population, especially of the aged population, and it seems to have been considered a normal and necessary aspect of society.

The amount given by the government at the time to those classified as the 'permanent poor' varied by perceived 'deservedness'. For example, in the 1930s support for "Women who are not widows, but whose husband are mentally or physically incapable of the support of the family" (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1936b, p. 4) was increased by $40 per year. Aged men could expect to receive $24 per year plus $2 per month in supplementary dole allowance. While such amounts were by any measure small and no one could have lived comfortably on those payments alone, as is shown below, the sum received did not compare all that badly with the incomes of many in the working population.

The Newfoundland Old Age Pension, established in 1911, was only available to men 75 years of age and over and after 1925 to the widows of men who had been receiving the pension, if a widow were at least 65 at the time of her pensioner husband's death. At first only 400 pensions were made available, but by the mid-1920s there would seem to have been enough pensions available (2,340 pensions, in 1921 there had only been 2,019 men 75 years old and over in Newfoundland) so that most elderly men would have been receiving it (Snell, 1993). Those receiving the Newfoundland Old Age pension obtained $50 per year from 1911 through to 1942.

While the Newfoundland legislature had enacted legislation by at least 1892 making "any child [who] has left destitute, abandoned or deserted or is about to leave destitute, abandon or desert his aged or infirm parent ... being destitute of the means of support and likely to become a burden on the colony" (quoted in Snell, 1990, p. 270) liable for their parents support, the law never seems to have been enforced, at least during the period of responsible government. Even the Commission of Government, obsessed as it was with cost cutting, seems to have been applied it at most only rarely. No cases were found in the Magistrates court records for the districts of Port-de-Grave and Harbour Main for the period from 1920 through 1949.

Relief and pensions were highly politicized in Newfoundland before the establishment of the Commission of Government in 1934, when Newfoundland gave up its Dominion status and returned to rule from London due to an inability to keep up payments on a large public debt. The absence, except in St. John's, of any sort of effective municipal or local government meant that the cost and administration of relief had always been handled by the central government. As seen above in the attempts of Relieving Officers to limit 'Widows' Pensions', the local Members of the House of Assembly (MHAs) were usually directly involved in how and to whom government support would be distributed.

In the case of the Newfoundland Old Age Pension the politicized nature of public relief was even more explicit. Unlike the original Canada Old Age Pension no needs criteria were established for the pension and pensions were granted for life. The number of pensions was set and was divided among the districts of the Dominion on a per capita basis—not on the basis of the number of elderly in the district. As a result of this, districts like Port-de-Grave, with a higher proportion of aged in the population, were oversubscribed and had more elderly waiting for pensions, while other districts, e.g., Labrador, did not use all of their allotted pensions. Pensioners were nominated by the district's Member of the House of Assembly (MHA), who in turn usually accepted the recommendation of local leaders, particularly the clergy. A clergyman applying directly to the Old Age Pensions' Accountant—the total administration apparatus of the program—was directed to write to the district MHA:

> In reply to yours of 16th inst., I may say that I think you had better write Mr. Crosbie about the application of Hy. Parsons. Mr. Crosbie likes to be consulted, and as a Member of the Executive, his word is of importance. (Newfoundland Department of Finance, 1917b)

While not an explicit aspect of the legislation, but in keeping with all other government benefits, pensions were sub-divided on the basis of religious denomination and community, as illustrated in a letter to the MHA for Port-de-Grave from the Old Age Pensions' Accountant:

> With regard to your note of 7th June re James Hawco of Roach's Line, I beg to say that I have James Hawco's application and that Robert Lane, O.A.P., of the Goulds, is dead. Both Hawco and Lane are Roman Catholics and belong to the same place. The pension will begin July 1, 1918. (Newfoundland Department of Finance, 1918)

In another letter a Justice of the Peace petitioning for a pension for a member of his community was directed to indicate which denomination the applicant belonged to "in pencil" on the application (Newfoundland Department of Finance, 1917a). This would not have been necessary where members of the clergy were making the application, as was most commonly the case.

While there were various restrictions on pensions, such as residency, these could be 'gotten over' with political support as shown in a letter to the succeeding MHA, for Port-de-Grave:

> In reply to yours of to-day, I beg to say that I have Mr. Hy. Wm. Martin's [formerly of Brigus] application on file, but I find that he has resided in U.S.A. the greater part of the past twenty years, and the Act says that he must have been residing in Newfoundland the past twenty years, although

> this fact may be gotten over, if the Executive agree in passing him.
> (Newfoundland Department of Finance, 1919)

The Newfoundland state collapsed under the impact of the Great Depression, caught between falling prices for its main exports, especially for dried cod, and rising public debt and increased demands for relief. While the Amulree Commission[10] placed much of the blame of the Newfoundland predicament on the sort of 'corruption', 'extravagance', and mismanagement which seemed to mark institutions like the 'Widows' Pension' and the Newfoundland Old Age Pension (Newfoundland Royal Commission, 1933), marked as they were by political patronage, most commentators coming after (e.g., Alexander, 1976; 1977) saw Newfoundland's problems as being rooted in more fundamental limits of the 'traditional economy' to support the population at anything like standards of living obtained in the rest of North America.

Because it was not an elected government, the Commission was able to *de-politicize* relief and pensions. The Commission of Government could attempt to reform the public welfare system—reforms which had only been considered by the pre-Commission government—in ways no elected government in Newfoundland was ever able to. However, the attempts at reform highlighted the fact that, while there might be widespread inequities in the system, such 'abuse' of the system was not the reason for the high cost of public welfare. Between June 1933[11] and December 1935 the Department of Public Health and Welfare undertook a program to review the eligibility of persons receiving the 'Widows' Pension' and the Old Age Pension. At the end of the review there were reductions in the list of Widows and Orphans, from 6,078 to 4,100; though 'deserving' cases were also added to the list. The financial result of which was a reduction of approximately $30,000 in expenditure. However, it was recognized that this would not be a permanent saving because a fairer and more 'rational' system would result in greater expenses than the previous system (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1936c, p. 1). It is not clear if there were significant reductions in the numbers of Old Age Pensions, though considering that 75 years of age was still the minimum age and it was during the economic depression it would be surprising if there were more than a very few. While the system might seem to have had problems, 'extravagance' was not one of them.

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[10] The Royal Commission which recommended that Newfoundland suspend responsible government.

[11] Before the installation of the Commission of Government.

At the same time the Commission of Government instigated a means test for both the 'Widows' Pension' and the Old Age Pension (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1936a), something previous, elected, governments had never been willing to attempt. The new scheme did not allow Pensions to be paid to individuals earning more than $10.00 per month or to those "in possession of a capital sum of $250.00", except for those living in the City of St. John's for whom the maximum earnings were $26.00 per month and the capital sum was $450.00. However, it was recognized that, "real property is of little or no importance, either as to realisable value or as to a source of income to the owner" and therefore the sum applied to cash assets only (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1936c, p. 5). While the amounts in either situation were small, the average earnings of individuals in all age groups was also small. In the 1935 for Brigus the average reported annual earnings for working individuals over 64 was $139 and they were $147 for less than 65.

It was clear that this sort of means tests was at odds with local traditions concerning the nature of collective support. In 1939, when relief payments were again rising (see Table 3.6), H. M. Mosdell, Secretary for Public Health and Welfare, complained that:

> For some time past the Department has been in receipt of a large number of application forms for Widows and Orphans and Infirm Allowances and for Old Age Pensioners, forwarded by Relieving Officers and bearing

> favourable recommendations from them, but made out on behalf of applicants who do not qualify under the regulations and therefore are not eligible for allowances. Fifty per cent of all applications received cannot possibly be considered as warranting any allowance, yet are recommended by our Relieving Officers as being cases eligible to receive allowances. (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1939a, p. 1)

Clearly local traditions were no longer in harmony with the economic priorities of the unelected government.

All forms of government support rose in the period between 1940 and 1945 with the recovery of the Newfoundland economy resulting from military spending during World War II. The 'Widow's Pension' rose from $40 to $60 a year and Old Age Pensions from $50 a year to $72 for an individual and $120 for a couple. As well relieving officers and the Department of Public Health and Welfare seem to have been willing to combine forms of relief which had previously normally been seen as mutually exclusive. For example, in one case in Brigus a couple was receiving a total of $180 a year in government assistance, with the husband receiving $120 in the form of sick relief, due to mental illness, while the wife "was granted the same as [a] widow", i.e., $60, due to her husband's illness. In another case a widow was receiving the 'Widow's Pension' despite receiving room and board from a family who was living with her in exchange for the deed to her property. In another example, a widow from Brigus had moved in with a married son living in St. John's and was receiving the 'Widow's Pension' despite the fact that her son and the rest of the children were all "self supporting" (all three examples from, Newfoundland Department of Public Welfare, 1949). The amount paid out by the government to sick, aged, and infirm also rose in this period, both absolutely and on a per person basis by about 100% (see Table 3.6). However, while the level of payments to the aged may have doubled, the average household earnings rose in the same period by almost 500% in Brigus and individual earnings by even more.

It would seem that both the 'Widows' Pension' and the Old Age Pension were fairly regularly paid to elderly individuals even if they were living with children who were employed. In 1943 the Auditor General, George P. Bradney complained that the Commissioner for Public Health and Welfare, J. C. Puddester, was granting Old Age Pensions and Widows' Allowances (i.e., 'Widows' Pension') to individuals who were living with children who, it seemed to the Auditor General, were in a position to support them. In his response Puddester outlined the basis on which he made such judgements:

> If they [the adult sons of someone applying for a Widow's Allowance or an Old Age Pension] are labourers in an Outport in this country, which means they are casual labourers and work perhaps two, three or four months of the year in the lumber woods or on Merchants' Premises or somewhere else, and living the remainder of the year as they had to do in most cases from 1931 to 1941 on relief, then I grant the application. If the sons and daughters are engaged in business or professions, I disallow the application in all cases.... In the case of Mrs. Knee, it is true that she has five sons, all married with families. Four are labourers and one is a lumber man, which means a logger, which also means they are casual workmen living from hand to mouth on a very meagre income. Therefore, I judge in these cases and I have found it so in the case of Mrs. Knee, that she should be given the paltry amount that we give them to buy clothing for herself if not food, which at the amount of $60.00 per year is not sufficient for the purpose. (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1943)

A number of cases are also found among the few surviving Old Age Pension records suggesting that at least by 1945, even though the *letter* of the law disqualified the arrangement, aged individuals were receiving either the Old Age Pension or the 'Widows' Pension' despite the fact that they were either living with children who were employed or had children in the community who were employed.

In sum, the amount paid out by the government to sick, aged, and infirm rose in this period, both absolutely and on a per person basis by about 100% (see Table 3.6) and the government seemed willing to support individuals whom they would not have previously, or at least not in the 1930s. However, while the level of payments to the aged may have risen, the general standard of living and, probably, the cost of living rose in the same period by a much greater factor. In 1945 it would seem probable that at least a solid majority of those over 64 years of age would have been receiving support from the government, though that support was relatively less than it had been previously.

C. Support from children

That the adult children of the elderly provided them with support is clear. The provision of wood was probably a major support, as independent living without such was impossible unless one had the financial resources to purchase coal, which most of the population of Brigus did not. As mentioned above, Bridget Fry's primary concern in deeding her property to Patrick Morrissey was to secure firewood in order to heat her home and she seems to have been incapable of securing it herself. Patrick Morrissey's response to finding that Mrs. Fry was unable to provide wood for herself (note that in that case she claimed to only require wood, Magistrate's Court Northern District Holyrood, 1941) would seem to indicate that, while he was willing as a neighbour to provide her with wood to a limited extent, that task should properly be done by children and, as Mrs. Fry had no children, she should "take some one in to live with her" (Magistrate's Court Northern District Holyrood, 1941) who would, at least as far as maintenance and property inheritance went, assume that role.

The case of Patrick McGrath (Magistrate's Court Northern District Holyrood, 1944) is also of note here. McGrath seems to have found it necessary to point out to the Magistrate's court that Michael Morrissey "wanted me to live with him" after McGrath's marriage to Margaret Morrissey, Michael's daughter who had been living with her father since the death of his wife (and Margaret's mother). There is at least the implication in McGrath's statement that the expected course was that he and Margaret Morrissey would form their own separate household on marriage. They had not done so, it would seem, because the elder Morrissey, no longer able to take care of the normal tasks of a man (collecting fuel, the heavy tasks associated with gardening/farming such as maintaining fences and clearing pasture land) or those previously done by his wife and then daughter, was asking them to remain with him on much the same basis as Patrick Morrissey (who also happened to be Michael Morrissey's son) was asked to by Bridget Fry. In both cases the planned transfer of property was made explicit and formalized by a deed.

However, especially in 1921 and 1935, many individuals, "living from hand to mouth on a very meagre income" (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1943), would not have been able, what ever their desires, to give much help. Meanwhile among those with greater resources—whose children probably also had more resources—many were probably in a position of not needing such help. In any case the extent of monetary support from children, especially those living away from the community, cannot be known, though there is little evidence that it can have been extensive, at least in 1921 and 1935. The apparent decline in agricultural production for household use by the elderly (as well as others) which occurred during the War (Crabb, 1975, pp. 92-106) at least suggest that, with increased job incomes of the young, the aged were receiving more support, and probably monetary support, from their children.

D. Private charity

There is little evidence of extensive private charity for the aged in Brigus. While without doubt the churches from time to time helped aged individuals, nothing in either the written records or in the interviews suggests this was extensive or something the aged in need could depend on. There was some mention in the interviews of helping aged neighbours and in one case an aged former employee by bringing them a scattered meal or some wood, there were also interviews in which the lack of significant aid was mentioned. In either case it is clear that such aid served as, at best, a minor supplement to government support and what help children were in a position to give.

Without doubt many aged individuals depended on support from their children, as is the case today and a few may have depended on private charity, though there is no evidence of anyone dependent on the latter. The important point however, is that, in line with Laslett's "nuclear-hardship" hypothesis, at least among the poor "the collectivity [not the extended family] was decidedly the most important redistributory agency" (1988, p. 165) and the collectivity, in the form of the state, was the ultimate guarantor of the welfare of the needy, including the aged.

VI. Incomes and Government Support of the Elderly

A. Incomes and Government Support in 1921

Unfortunately, 'Earnings' are only given on the 1935 and 1945 censuses. As mentioned in Chapter 2, it would seem clear that 'earnings' refer only to job earnings and individuals almost never reported other income, therefore, earnings are only an approximate indication of family incomes and economic resources. Earnings clearly did not include non-monetary activities such as gardening or non-monetary exchanges between families. Nor did it include households which were living off of savings or investments, such as those who Bob Bartlett described, at the first decade of the twentieth century, as "Those men ... were more or less, retired, had a little money put by" (Bartlett, c. 1930, p. 6). Even the Catholic priest did not report any earnings, though he employed two servants who did. Finally, it did not show income coming from children or relatives living and working outside the community and who sent money home. Most importantly it did not give any indication of government support, such as Old Age Pensions or relief, coming to individuals or households. Nonetheless, lacking a better measure, it is useful for comparing the relative incomes/wealth between age groups and across censuses.

The actual numbers of aged receiving government support is difficult to determine. Records for the period before the establishment of the Commission of Government are extremely scattered. Many official records from the pre-Commission period seem to have been destroyed sometime around 1931 or 1932 (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1935). Both 1921 and 1935 were periods of economic distress in Newfoundland and, at least rates of able bodied relief, were probably high. For 1921 the

Magistrate at Brigus reported that around 30 families applied for and received casual relief in Brigus out of 200 to 250 families[12] (Colonial Secretary [Newfoundland], 1921, pp. 1-2). Twenty-eight individuals were listed on the published census as "Paupers" while a further three were listed as "Crippled or Disabled" with no break-down by age or sex. These figures may have come from the Relieving Officer as they are not part of the surviving nominal census. If, however, the figure reflects the number from the pauper list then most of those on the 'pauper list' would have been men because, as indicated above, widows receiving the Widows' Pension were not on the list and many on the list would have been aged. There were 61 widows (58 on published census) and it would seem that most were receiving the 'Widows' Pension'. An unknown number, but probably the majority, of men over 75 would have been receiving the Old Age Pension.

All that can be inferred about the incomes of the elderly in the 1921 census is that, probably, most of those not listing an occupation were dependent on government support, in the form of the Old Age Pension or relief, permanent or casual, for their support. In 1921 widows were considered among the most deserving poor and widows would normally receive a cash allowance of $40 per year plus they could expect to receive $2 per month in supplementary dole allowance. Lacking better evidence one must assume that the relative economic position of the elderly was more or less the same as it was in 1935, as the labour force participation rates are similar. Whether or not the elderly in 1921 may have been relatively better off than in 1935, they doubtless were absolutely better off, as was most of the community. While 1921 was a period of distress—though not to the degree of the 1930s—it was not so among fishermen. Most economic distress was among wage workers who had been working at the mines in Bell Island, Sydney, Nova Scotia, and elsewhere and who had returned to Brigus due to the depression (Colonial Secretary [Newfoundland], 1921); as indicated there were few if any aged individuals among those.

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[12] It is not clear what the relieving officer considered to be part of Brigus nor what constituted a family. By the 1921 census there would have been somewhere between 250 and 350 families in the area and about 200 in Brigus proper.

B. Incomes and Government Support in 1935

The 1935 census allows for a more detailed analysis of the economies of households and of individuals because earnings are reported. As mentioned previously the majority of male household heads listed an occupation in 1935 and 89% of these also reported earnings (33 of 37), suggesting that they were listing more than just a former occupation. In at least one case, a Catholic priest, age 72, the lack of reported earnings indicates missing data rather than no earnings, since, as he was paying two servants annual wages of $500 and $200, he was clearly receiving a reasonable income. While some of the reported earnings of men over 64 years of age were extremely small, with 27% (n = 9) reporting annual earnings of less than $20 annually, the same was true for those under 65 with over 23% (n = 55) giving earnings of less than $20.

The average household earnings of households headed by individuals over 64 years of age in which at least one member reported earnings was $189, versus $230 for households headed by those less than 65 years of age.[13] In comparison the average individual earnings, of those reporting any earnings, for individuals over 64 was $139 versus $147 for individuals less than 65. While households headed by aged individuals had lower earnings than those headed by younger individuals they also tended to contain fewer people than those headed by individuals under 65 (average of 3.5 versus 5.1). On a per household member basis, households headed by aged individuals would appear to have been about as well off as those headed by younger individuals. The earnings per person for the former being $54 essentially identical to the average in households headed by younger individuals of $50.

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[13] Household earnings is a variable constructed by adding the different individual 'earnings' of each member of the household. 'Earnings' almost never included payments such as relief or public pensions. Households headed by individuals over 64 also includes the few households where the spouse, i.e., the wife, of the head was over 64 while the head was not, though in all cases they were over 60. Only one woman over 64 listed either an occupation or any earnings, a hotel keeper reporting annual earnings of $250. All households headed by women were headed by widows or single women and only three listed an occupation, a postmistress, a dressmaker, and a "Superioress" of a Convent, all single women.

This, however, does not take into account the fact that a higher proportion of aged individuals did not report any income than did the population as a whole. For those households not listing any earnings, financial resources must be estimated. Some elderly individuals not listing any earnings were clearly living on pensions or savings. However, the majority of those not listing an occupation came from backgrounds which suggests that they would have been unlikely to have accumulated much in the way of savings. While some aged individuals and couples living on their own had children living elsewhere in Brigus, the earnings reported by those children—in the depths of the world wide depression of the 1930s—suggest that most were not in a position to provide much in the way of monetary help.

The incomes of the households where no income was recorded on the census can be estimated, probably representing the minimum amount, by assuming that all individuals were receiving an income of at least the level they would on relief or via other forms of government support (where appropriate). "The proven poverty, destitution and lack of support"[14] of individuals and families was in theory the sole "qualification for furnishing relief" of $2 per person per month (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1936b, p. 5). Widows at the time could receive a cash allowance of $40 per year and most would seem to have received it. As well they might, depending on their circumstances, receive $2 per month in supplementary dole allowance. More than likely most of the men over 75 were receiving the Newfoundland Pension as there were 144 Old

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[14] The government, sensibly, never considered the sale of homes, fishing gear, or other productive property to be a source of support.

Age Pensions paid out in the fourth quarter of 1935 in the District of Port-de-Grave (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1936d) for a population of 157 men 75 years of age and older (though an unknown number of these pensions would have been paid to widows). In 1945, 68% of men 75 and over for Newfoundland as a whole were receiving the pension (Newfoundland Department of Finance, 1948).[15] Those receiving the Newfoundland Old Age pension were receiving $50 per year in 1935. Aged men less than 75 years, whether married or not could, if their circumstances merited it, receive $24 per year plus $2 per month in supplementary dole allowance paid in provisions. However, this arrangement was claimed by the central government to be unusual.

Using this formula a fairly similar picture is drawn, for the aged as a whole (though, as will be seen below, not for more specific groups of the aged), with the average estimated individual earnings of household heads over 64 being $92 and average estimated household earnings being $161 for households headed by individuals over 64, while the equivalent figures for individuals less than 65 and the households they headed were $152 and $217. On a per household member basis, aged individuals living on their own averaged estimated earnings per person of $51 as opposed to the overall average of $48. The fact that there was little difference between the figures derived from earnings and from estimated earnings highlights the fact that government support, either in the form of permanent relief or in Old Age Pensions probably kept the incomes of the elderly reasonably close to that found among the population as a whole, though in an absolute sense their income was limited.

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[15] Most of these men, numbering 2,257, would have been married; in the same year 1,967 widows of pensioners were receiving the Newfoundland Old Age Pension, though it cannot be known what percentage of the eligible population this represented.

Some statistics on relief exist for the period around the 1935 census, however, numerous changes in policy, undertaken by the Commission in a desperate attempt to cut costs, make their interpretation difficult. For example, in the fall of 1937 the numbers on permanent relief were claimed to be falling in Brigus while the numbers on Casual Relief (Able Bodied Poor Relief) were claimed to be rising (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1938). Meanwhile the Department reported at the end of December 1937 that people were being transferred from the list of casual poor and provided with a quarterly allowances instead, i.e., they would presumably be taken off of the casual and placed on the permanent poor list. The Commission reduced the numbers on the list of Widows and Orphans by almost 2000 persons in 1935, though to what extent aged widows were taken off the list cannot be known. The reductions and savings were only temporary as allowances were later increased and others were put on the list who had not been there previously (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1936a, p. 1).

Subsistence production for household use clearly remained important for all individuals, during the depression years. In Newfoundland as a whole agricultural production rose during this period (Crabb, 1975). The number of farmers listed in the census in Brigus also rose, going from 13 in 1921 to 28 in 1935. Not all of the farmers were doing so on a simple subsistence basis, as the average earnings of farmers ($207) was substantively higher than those of non-farmers ($126), though much of the production would have been for household subsistence. Doubtless decreased incomes meant that more people were using wood for heating, resulting in people having to go further back into the country (up to ten miles) in order to find wood. Nicholas Smith, who when younger had spent a good part of his winters getting wood, mentions in passing using coal when he was over seventy during this period (Smith, 1936). Smith was relatively off and so able to purchase coal.

Whatever limited sources of private charity which were available to the aged in Brigus in 1921 would have been even more severely limited in the depression years. As well support from children (which was discussed above) must also have been more limited than previously.

C. Incomes and Government Support in 1945

The economic picture of these households found in the 1945 census seems to have changed dramatically from previous ones. The average household earnings for households headed by individuals[16] over 64 years of age, reporting earnings were $888 versus $1,162 for households headed by those less than 65 years of age, while the average individual earnings for individuals over 64 was $449 versus $836 for individuals less than 65. On a per household member basis, households headed by aged individuals averaged earnings of $227 per person versus the average in households headed by younger individuals of $255. The difference between 1935 and 1945 is most evident in the comparison of the average individual earnings. In 1935 the average earnings of those over 64 had been 95% of the earnings of those under 65, whereas in 1945 it was less than 55%. But even this hides much of the difference between the censuses because, while in 1921 and 1935 the majority of male heads of households over 64 years of age had listed an occupation, only a small minority did so in 1945. In 1945 most (37 of 58) male household heads 65 and older listed themselves as retired and most (42 of 58) did not report any earnings.

At the same time the percentage of all households with more than one person listing an occupation (being a rough measure of employment, see Chapter 2) dropped. In 1921, 35% of all households headed by males[17] had more than one person listing an occupation.

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[16] No women over 64 listed an occupation and only one, a retired teacher earning $576, listed any earnings in the 1945 census.

[17] Only male headed households are chosen to control for the fact that households headed by individuals over 64 were more likely to be headed by women than households headed by younger individuals and women, at all age groups, were much less likely to

In 1935, 31% of all such households had more than one person listing an occupation. However, in 1945 this had dropped to 21% of male headed households. Among the elderly this drop was even more dramatic going from 43% of all households headed by males in 1921—a substantially higher percentage than among households headed by those under 65 years of age (see Table 3.7)—to 27% in 1935 and to 14% in 1945. Only eight households headed by elderly individuals, out of 73 such households, combined the earnings of more than one generation, in all cases fathers and sons, in 1945. In contrast in 1921, 21 of 75 such households combined the earnings of more than one generation (16 with one or more sons, one son-in-law, three daughters, and one grandson), and for 1935 the comparable figure was 16 of 77 (twelve with one or more sons and four with a daughter).

With the majority of older individuals reporting neither occupation nor earnings, most of these individuals would have looked either towards their children or towards the government for support. Most elderly widows would more than likely be receiving a widow's allowance of between $40-$60 per year and some might also, if their circumstances warranted, receive a disability pension of up to an additional $60. The decline in the numbers of widows living on their own between 1935 and 1945, going from 50% of widows over 64 in 1935 (7 of 14) to 13% in 1945 (2 of 15) may be partly explained by the government's willingness to give support to widows living with adult children combined with a relative decrease in the support given to the aged, which would have made it more difficult for elderly widows to live on their own. By 1945 a fair number of widows would also appear to have been receiving the Newfoundland Old Age Pension—as the widows of pensioners—along with men 75 years of age and older. While the figures for the community do not exist, in 1945 for Newfoundland as a whole, 1,967 women—some of whom were between 65 and 74 and not including women whose

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list an occupation than were men.

husbands were receiving the Old Age Pension—and 2,257 men were receiving Old Age Pensions out of a population of 3,208 women and 3,296 men over 74 (Newfoundland Department of Finance, 1948).

By 1945 government policy on support was no longer in flux and the numbers receiving government assistance, as permanent poor, in Brigus seems to have reached a relatively steady state with an average 29 families (range 19 to 36) and 119 individuals (range 83 to 143) receiving relief as "Sick, infirm, widows, etc." (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1944-48), a number of whom would have been over 64. Widows were eligible to receive $40-$60 per year via permanent relief (i.e., their 'widow's pay' or 'allowance') and most elderly widows would seem to have been receiving the higher sum (Newfoundland Department of Public Welfare, 1949) and some might also have been receiving a disability pension of up to an additional $60. By 1945 a fair number, perhaps the majority, of widows over 64 years of age would also appear to have been receiving the Newfoundland Old Age Pension, though only as the widows of pensioners. Probably most of the men over 75 were receiving the Newfoundland Old Age Pension and those receiving the pension were receiving $72 per year for a single person and $120 per year for a couple in 1945. If the proportions were similar for Brigus as for the rest of Newfoundland, then about 13 of the 19 men over 74 years of age, most of whom were married to women over 64 years of age, would have been receiving the pension and ten of the 16 unmarried women (11 of whom were widows and were the only ones eligible for the Old Age Pension) over 74 would have been receiving the Pension. If their circumstances merited it, aged men less than 75, whether married or not, were also eligible, for $60 in permanent relief plus a disability pension of up to an additional $60.

In contrast to the mid-1930s, there seemed to be a greater willingness and ability of the Department of Public Health and Welfare to more frequently combine previously mutually exclusive forms of relief. This seems to have been in response to the new economic situation of increased prosperity and increased costs of living.

Using estimated annual incomes calculated using the same logic as for 1935, the relative decline in the incomes of the elderly between 1935 and 1945 becomes evident. The average estimated individual earnings of household heads over 64 was $154 and average estimated household earnings for households headed by individuals over 64 were $647, while the equivalent figures for those under 65 were $809 and $1094. On a per household member basis, those households headed by those over 64 averaged estimated earnings per person of $172 as opposed to the average for those under 65 of $241.

Estimated earnings doubtless underestimate the incomes of at least some individuals not reporting any earnings. The war years had provided unprecedented numbers of well paying jobs in Newfoundland and more than likely at least some were living off their savings, though only a small minority could have been in the position to put aside significant amounts of money. Probably of more importance was that the increased incomes associated with the war may have allowed children to help in the support of aged parents who were living on their own to a greater extent than they had previously, though there is little direct evidence for this.

Whether in some absolute sense the aged were better off, i.e., they could get more basic food stuffs, with the increases in relief and Old Age Pension rates is hard to ascertain. It is clear that the cost of living was rising, especially for those needing to purchase heating fuel (though many in Brigus did not), and the government recognized that fact (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1942). Some of the increases in the cost of living were really increased expectations as some consumer goods which the traditional Newfoundland economy consigned to the status of luxuries become *necessities*, like tinned fruit and some basic household appliances. Some of the increase represented a real increase as prices rose with war-time restrictions and as consumer demand grew with increased cash in the economy. While some of those increased costs were mostly confined to St. John's, such as housing and heating fuel, others affected the outports as well. Most importantly the cost of food probably rose by at least 50% between 1935 and 1945 (MacKenzie, 1986, pp. 132-133) and this would have had a major effect on the elderly. Whatever the absolute changes in the incomes of the aged, the downward trend in the relative incomes of the aged is clear, and most evident among those living on their own (discussed in more detail below), especially for those dependent on government support.

Agriculture, especially subsistence production for household use, declined with the increased personal incomes associated with the Second World War (Crabb, 1975, pp. 92-106). The number of farmers in Brigus fell back to 15, with the average earnings of farmers ($653) being substantively lower than non-farmers ($786). Relative to 1935 and to 1921, probably more of the production would have been for household subsistence. Interviews suggested that for more of the elderly than for younger persons' a significant source of living expenses consisted of "help from Government and growing own vegetables." (Newfoundland Department of Public Welfare, 1949, file #7961). However, as mentioned above, this absolute decline in subsistence agriculture combined with the relative decline in incomes at least suggests that increased incomes in the population as a whole resulted in increased transfers, in particular of money, from the young to the old probably on a familial basis.

VII. The Aged as a Social Category in Brigus and Newfoundland

Some proponents of GMT have argued that in the shift from a society in which the responsibility for the aged was vested in kin groupings to one in which the collectivity is vested with such responsibility there is an increased tendency for the state to establish explicit age norms (e.g., Mayer & Müller, 1986). Whether there were such explicit age norms in Brigus and in Newfoundland is difficult to ascertain.

The shift in occupational structure from one where the aged were not noticeably less likely to work, found in 1921 and 1935, to one in which the aged were far less likely than were younger individuals to list an occupation, found in 1945, would seem to indicate such a change was taking place. However, this change, if it really represented a permanent change, would not seem to have been caused or accompanied by any changes in government policy.

The Widow's Pension, while it was probably received by many aged women was not directed specifically at the aged and, at least in theory, was not provided simply on the basis of age. However, again at least in theory neither was the Widow's Pension provided simply on the basis of widowhood for, as the government was wont to repeat, "the proven poverty, destitution and lack of support of the application shall be the sole qualification for furnishing relief of any kind" (Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare, 1936b). The same considerations applied to the Old Age Pension. While the pension was restricted to those over 75 years of age, unlike modern old age pensions, they were not available to all those who had reached that age even though in practice most would seem to have received it. Both pieces of legislation suggest that, while the aged were, at least at times, recognized as a social group, agedness was a considerably less precise and important social construct than it is today.

The social construction of age at the local community level, in Brigus, is even less certain and clear, the census material giving virtually nothing other than what is mentioned above concerning occupations. The court records are equally inconsistent, age is sometimes given but often it is not and there seems no pattern to the reporting of age and with both young and older individuals having their age listed in some cases and not in others. However, where widows were either the plaintiff or the defendant widowhood is almost always mentioned at least suggesting that, at least within the context of the magistrates court—certainly an unusual context—widowhood may have been a more relevant social category than age.[18] Again, it can be argued that this lack of clarity and consistency in the social construction of old age supports the argument that agedness was not "a stage of life both clearly and categorically defined....", with "...age, more than any other criterion [setting] the elderly apart from society" (Haber, 1983, p. 1) as it is claimed to be in the mid to late twentieth century. The available sources make any such arguments for either Brigus or Newfoundland as a whole at best highly tentative and the question cannot be addressed—if it can be addressed at all—with the sources employed in this study.

VIII. The Living Arrangements of the Elderly

The elderly lived in a number of household arrangements. Different types of living arrangements are, of course, characteristic of different social formations. GMT argues that in 'traditional societies' the elderly would normally have been found living with their children and grandchildren or, if they had no children, with their siblings and/or nieces and nephews or with other relatives. Furthermore, the elderly would have been found living on their only in exceptional circumstances. GMT—along with theories which claim to contradict it (e.g., Anderson, 1987; Thane, 1983)—correlates the rise in public support for the elderly with a decline in familial support for them and with a decline in intergenerational coresidency. In so far as production was based on the patriarchal family in 'traditional societies'—as GMT posits and has generally accepted for Newfoundland fishing (and non-fishing) families (Antler, 1981; Byron, 1976; Cadigan, 1995)—then control of production should be reflected in headship of the household. The main questions to be addressed in this section are what evidence is there for the elderly living primarily within patriarchal families founded on familial production and what was the relative economic position of the aged and their families.

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[18] However, in all of the cases where widowhood is employed as a social identity, the individuals were also elderly and while age in some cases is not mentioned (it was determined from the nominal census materials where possible) in all of those cases it is obvious from the court case itself that the woman is both a widow and aged. To confuse the issue further, religion, which was clearly among the most important social identities in Newfoundland at the time, coming up in many social contexts, almost never appears in the court records and never as an explicit identity.

One of the critiques of the use of census data to tell us something about families and their history is that census data provides only a single snap-shot which tends to obscure extended family relationships (Berkner, 1975). In order to address this concern the nominal census material is examined in detail and in the majority of cases individuals are examined across censuses. As the unit of analysis here is the household of the elderly, the organization of the rest of the chapter is based on an analysis of those households across censuses rather than of the different household types in each census year.

A. The Elderly as Heads of Households

Headship of households and ownership are clearly closely linked on the censuses. While ownership is not recorded on the 1921 census, it is in 1935 and 1945 and in 1935, 96% of dwellings were owned and in all cases it was the head who was listed as owner while in 1945, 96% of dwellings are owned and, despite the confusion on the census (discussed in Chapter 2), in only three cases (1%) is there any confusion in the correspondence between headship and ownership. Given the correlation of headship and ownership and within the context of patriarchal household structures one would expect to find women heads of households only where they were single or widowed and had no male relatives; for men one would expect them to have remained as the head of the household at least until well into old age and to do so irrespective of their type of living arrangements.

Most men 65 years of age and older remained the heads of their households and in no case, at any age, was a man listed as the husband of the head. The vast majority of men over 64 years of age, across all three censuses, were listed as heads of households (see Table 3.8). Most women over 64 years of age were also either heads of their households

(1921, 28%; 1935, 23%; 1945, 28%) or the wife of the head (1921, 36%; 1935, 46%; 1945, 44%; and see Table 3.8).

The old-old (75 and older) were less likely to be heads of households than were the young-old (65-74). In all three censuses the proportion of individuals who were listed as heads of households or the wife of the head declined with age for those over 64. Much of the decline in the proportion of older individuals who were heads of households is also a function of the interaction of gender and widowhood—which is in turn a function of age—within the context of a patriarchal family structure. Virtually all married men remained as heads of their households.[19] Single individuals made up a very small part of the population of those 65 years of age and older and the proportion of these classified as the heads of households varied by age group and census. Widowed individuals, especially widows, were the group over 64 least likely to be classified as the heads of households.

At least in the 1935 and 1945 census there is a fairly clear pattern of a decline with age in the likelihood of widows being heads of households. Widows over 80 years of age were between one third and one half as likely as widows 65 to 70 years old to be heads of households in the latter two censuses and across all three censuses widows over 80 were the only group over 64 years of age in which most individuals were not the heads of households. With age, women went from being listed as the head of the household to being listed as the mother or mother-in-law of the head (see Table 3.10). In 1921 of the 26 widows residing with sons or sons-in-law, only seven were listed as the head, in 1935 only four of 19 were, while in 1945 seven of 17 were. In comparison, of the widowers living with sons (none lived with sons-in-law) in 1921, six of eight were the heads of the household, in 1935 all (of seven) were, and in 1945 16 of 18 were. Widowers do not show the consistent age pattern found among widows.

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[19] In the 1935 census there is one man who categorized himself as married and who was not listed as the head of the household. However, that man's married status was in fact ambiguous, as he had been separated from his wife for almost a decade. The man's wife (who was less than 65 in 1935) listed herself as widowed, despite the fact that her husband was still living (the information on their separation comes from the court records, Magisterial Enquiries 1937, pp. 53-54, unrelated to that separation). For the purposes of this study these individuals were coded as separated (see Table 3.8).

As today, widows were much more common than widowers and increasingly so with age. In 1921 for the age group from 65 to 75 years of age, 17% of men were widowed compared to 47% of women; for the age group 75 years of age and older the figures were 42% and 79% respectively. For 1935 the equivalent figures for the 65 to 75 years age group were 14% for men and 36% for women, and for the 75 years and older group the figures were 22% and 72%. For 1945 the figures were, respectively, 29% and 45%, and 37% and 69%.

One reason that sons and, though less commonly, sons-in-law were found listed as the head of a household where previously their mother or mother-in-law had been, was related to inheritance of property. As land was often held without written title and as title was or could be disputed, as could wills, elderly individuals would often hand over or sell for a nominal fee, their property to those who were or who promised to take care of them in their old age. The same could take place in the case of a second marriage, in order to insure that the surviving spouse (usually the widow) retained ownership of the property and to use such to ensure her own upkeep in old age.

Two examples of this process are found in the Magistrate's Court records from the 1930s and 1940s. The first involved a dispute over a fence and pasture with the complainant claiming the pasture as "My father is bedridden and he has given possession of the property there to me by deed." (Magistrate's Court Northern District Holyrood, 1942). As well, in a later case between the same individuals it was claimed that:

> John McGrath, deft., sworn. I am 36 years of age, married and I live at Irish Town, Brigus. I have lived with my father-in-law the late Mich. Morrissey since I was married to his daughter in 1939. He wanted me to live with him. My father-in-law Mich. Morrissey died Nov. 14th 1943. He made a will and he willed all his property to his daughter Margaret

> McGrath, who is my wife. (Magistrate's Court Northern District Holyrood, 1944)

Clearly property inheritance and care were closely intertwined here and, in an attempt to forestall disputes over its transmission,[20] the property was deeded by the widower to his daughter during his life-time (and then reinforced by a will). In 1935, before his daughter's marriage, Michael Morrissey, widowed and living alone with his daughter, had listed himself as head of the household; while he did not survive to 1945, the strong link between headship and ownership suggests that his son-in-law and daughter would have been listed as head and wife of the household had he still been alive.

In another case from the same period a widow had arranged that, "My late husband, Augustus Fry, sold me his whole estate in the year of 1933. This was done a short time before he died" (she was his second wife and he seems to have had children from his first marriage). This was again done seemingly to insure that the title to the estate was clear. By 1940 Mrs. Fry seems to have found it difficult to take care of herself and so she arranged with a neighbour, Patrick Morrissey, that he "was to support and maintain me for my natural life" in exchange for which she sold him her property, "I want this deed made to Patrick Morrissey just the same as it is was made by my husband to me." for what was clearly the nominal fee of one dollar (Magistrate's Court Northern District Holyrood, 1941). For some reason the arrangement did not work out and by the time of the court action she seems to have made informal arrangements[21] with another family to take care of her. Whether Patrick Morrissey ever got the property is unclear, though by 1945 Bridget Fry was living in her house with yet another family, presumably on the same basis. The husband and father in that family listed as owner and head of the household in the census.

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[20] Not altogether successful, though both cases were found for the daughter and son-in-law.

[21] As the court recognized the legality of the bill of sale with Patrick Morrissey.

When we examine the gender of those over 65 who listed themselves as not being the heads of households we find that most were female (85% in 1921, 86% in 1935, and 83% in 1945). There were about equal numbers of widowed (and a few single) men and women heads of households. Those over 65 who listed themselves as heads of households or spouses of heads lived in notably smaller households than did those who were listed as other than head (see Table 3.11).

Not surprisingly when we look at the marital status of those, 65 years of age and older, who listed themselves as something other than heads of households or spouses of heads, we find that all were either single (8% in 1921, 10% in 1935, and none for 1945) or widowed (92% in 1921, 90% in 1935, and all for 1945). The heads of households on the other hand were made up mostly of married couples 54% (45) in 1921 and 63% (51) and 58% (41) respectively in 1935 and 1945. There were about equal numbers of widowed (and a few single) men and women heads of households. However, in all of the census years the absolute numbers of single and widowed persons who were heads of households was greater than the number of who listed themselves as not being the heads of households among those over 64.

The pattern of headship among males is congruent with the sort of extended household structure posited by GMT or the "patrilocal patricentric extended family" (Queen & Habenstein, 1974, p. 383) posited for Newfoundland by those such as Sider (1986) and Queen and Habenstein. The pattern is also congruent with what Kertzer (1995) has labelled "a nuclear reincorporation household system" (p. 377), wherein neolocally formed nuclear families take dependent parents—most often widowed mothers—back into their households in the latter's late old age.

In order to determine which pattern is the more typical of Brigus in the 1920s through 1940s we must examine the types of households the aged were found in and how those households changed over time. As well we need to determine if those multi-generational households which did exist were based on the household/family as the organizing productive unit.

B. Elderly Living on Their Own or With a Spouse Only

One of the central arguments of GMT and congruent with Newfoundland modernization theory is that elderly individuals living alone or with only their spouse is a phenomenon confined to the modern industrial societies, other than in exceptional circumstances (Cowgill, 1981, pp. 23-26). Clearly such families could not be the site of familial production. In an established community such as Brigus, while an elderly individual might have no children, it was unlikely that one would have no relatives at all. Despite this, across all three censuses, in a significant number of households containing the elderly in Brigus, elderly persons either lived alone or with a spouse only, and in some cases a domestic servant[22] or a boarder.

1. 1921 census

In 1921, 21% ($n = 27$) of those 65 years old and older resided alone or with only their spouse, in 20 such households (see Table 3.9).[23] All of these individuals were either married or widowed, which is not surprising as only 5% of those over 64 years of age were single. Ten of these individuals were living alone, eight widows and two widowers; 16 were living with their spouse (and in one case a servant as well) in nine households[24]; and one widower was living with two boarders.

The relatively long gap between the 1921 and the 1935 census meant that by 1935 only two of the individuals living alone or with a spouse only in 1921 were still living or at least living in Brigus. One of those individuals had remarried and was living with his new wife (25 years his junior) and a grandson, the other individual was boarding with non-relatives. It is unclear if either had any children living in the community, though both their family names are very common ones and both probably had relatives of some sort in the community.

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[22] With very few exceptions, domestic servants were young women less than 20 years of age who worked for a few years before marriage or emigration. Servant as a long-term, familial type relationship seems to have been unknown, except perhaps for the few domestics working for Catholic priests.

[23] One of these households included two boarders.

[24] Note that not all spouses were over 64 years of age.

There is no obvious pattern in the age of individuals living on their own, though those 65-69 and those 80 and older generally seem to have been less likely to live on their own than those between 70 and 80. This at least suggests that the proportion of aged living on their own increased as children matured and decreased again as individuals entered latter old age and were less able to support themselves. By definition those living alone or with a spouse only lived in small households (see Table 3.11).

The economic bases of these households came from various resources in 1921. The majority of male heads of households (seven[25] of eleven) listed an occupation, though the intensity of the work is not clear. Three of the male heads either listed themselves or clearly were employees, a labourer, a clergyman, and a civil servant. Four of those reporting their employment status' gave 'self-employed', three as fishermen and one as a "carman", i.e., a carter. The three fishermen may have been involved in the very limited local inshore fishery.[26] One male head lists his occupation as "Private Income" and so would seem to have been retired.

Most of those not listing an occupation were probably not in the workforce and would have been dependent on other sources of income. None of the female heads of households listed an occupation. Most were probably receiving relief in the form of the 'Widow's Pension'. Probably most of the male heads of households 75 years of age and older would have been receiving the Newfoundland Old Age Pension, though, unlike the later periods, none of the widows would have been receiving it. Some of the other aged men may also have been receiving relief as either permanent or casual poor and some may have been living off savings, and some would have been receiving help from children, other relatives, or neighbours, probably more often in kind than cash. Unless things were fundamentally different from the next censuses, even though many were probably living on very limited resources, the individuals living on their own were probably relatively well off in comparison to other aged individuals.

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[25] This includes one individual who, while he listed nothing on the census, other sources (Royal Commission on Health and Public Charities, 1930, p. 175) indicate was employed as the community Relieving Officer.

[26] Using the census definition of 'working on own account' this would have meant that they would have been fishing on their own, however, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the term seems to have been interpreted rather loosely.

If the elderly living on their own were generally better off than other aged individuals this suggests that independent and neolocal residence for married children was preferred. However, the lack of a question on income on the surviving census tables in the 1921 census and the lack of a previous census to examine the economic backgrounds of individuals, limits what can be said about this.

2. 1935 census

In 1935, 28% (n = 37) of those 65 years old and older resided alone or with only their spouse, in 25 such households (see Table 3.9). While this represented a small increase in the numbers of aged individuals living on their own it was not an increase which was to continue into the next census.

All but one of these individuals, a Roman Catholic priest, were either married or widowed. Nine of these individuals were living alone and two with servants only (including the priest), while twenty-seven individuals were living with their spouse (and in one case a servant as well) in 14 households. Only three of these individuals had clearly identifiable children living in the community, however, a further 16 of them had children listed on the previous census and these children might have either been living in other communities or were living in Brigus but cannot be identified across censuses (especially daughters who had married in the interim). Eighteen of these individuals either were not on the previous census (n = 7) or had no children listed (n = 11) on the previous census, though some may have had children in Brigus or in neighbouring communities. Of the nine individuals living on their own, seven were widows, one a widower, and one a never-married man.

Looking back to the 1921 census we see that those living alone or with a spouse only came from a limited number of family types. Most commonly these individuals had been living with unmarried children (38%, n = 14), many had been living alone or with a spouse only in 1921 (24% n = 9), while the rest had been living with married children (5%, n = 2), married children and grandchildren (3%, n = 1), other relatives (16%, n = 6), and non-kin (3%, n = 1; four were not in the previous census). That at least half of those living on their own had previously been living with children suggests that living alone was not simply a function of childlessness.

Looking ahead to 1945, of those individuals 65 years old and older who had resided alone or with spouse only, with or without servants, only 5 remained in the 1945 census: one remained living on her own with her husband, now also over 64, as they had in 1921; one was living with a daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren and was no longer the head of the dwelling, her daughter's family having moved back in with her; one was living in her dwelling with an unrelated individual; one was living with an unrelated individual in that individual's dwelling and no longer as head; and the final one was living in her own house with an unrelated family who were taking care of her in return for inheriting her property. Again, while there was not a dramatic pattern in the age of individuals living on their own in 1935, individuals in the 70 to 80 age year group were generally more likely to live on their own than were those in the 65 to 70 years age group.

The 1935 census allows for a more detailed analysis of the economies of households and of individuals because earnings are reported and because the past situation of households and individuals can often be found on the previous census. As in 1921, the economic bases of these households varied. The majority of male heads of households (13 of 17) listed an occupation and one of the women, married and wife of the listed head, listed herself as a hotel keeper. All but two of those who listed a occupation also gave annual earnings, suggesting that they were listing more than just a former occupation. The Catholic priest also did not give any earnings, though was the active priest at the time and not retired.

The average reported individual earnings was $238 which was above the average household earnings of $219 and well above the average individual earnings of $145. When compared with all households headed by individuals over 64, average household earnings of $189, the individual earnings of those living alone or with spouse only were also above average. Because these were small households, on a per household member basis aged individuals living on their own would appear to have been, relatively, even better off with the earnings per person being $96 almost twice the overall average of $51.

This, however, does not take into account the fact that a higher proportion of aged individuals did not report any income (and in the previous averages they were treated as missing) than did the population as a whole. For those households not listing any earnings, financial resources are more difficult to estimate. Some were clearly living on pensions: one individual reported his occupation as "Retired U.C. Clergyman" and his industry as "Income" and had a domestic servant[27]; another had been a steamship captain and combined with his wife's earnings from her hotel, $250, was probably fairly comfortably off. However the majority of those not listing an occupation seem to have come from a background which suggests that they would have been unlikely to have accumulated much in the way of savings. While some aged individuals and couples living on their own had children living elsewhere in Brigus, the earnings reported by those children suggest that they were not in a position to provide much, at least monetary, help.

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[27] He reported being married though his wife was not listed on the census. He was not from Brigus and does not appear on the earlier or later censuses.

Using estimated earnings (the formula for which is discussed above) a slightly different picture is drawn, with the average estimated individual earnings of household heads being $117 and average estimated household earnings being $147 for those living alone or with only their spouse—the equivalent figures for the population as a whole were $134 and $201. However, on a per household member basis, aged individuals living on their own were relatively well off, with average estimated earnings per person of $73 as opposed to the overall average of $49. The difference between the figures derived from earnings and from estimated earnings highlights the fact that there were really two separate groups; married men with relatively well paying occupations and widowed individuals, mostly widows, dependent on the government in order to survive. Among the households headed by widowed and single individuals (ignoring the Roman Catholic priest and the retired clergyman, both of whom had servants) only one individual listed both an occupation and earnings, a widowed cobbler, aged 68, working on his own account with reported annual earnings of three dollars and another individual who listed an occupation but no earnings, a casual labourer (and listed as a wheel wright in 1921) working on own account, aged 66, which strongly suggests that he was surviving on very limited means, probably including relief.

Meanwhile, as in 1921 none of the female heads of households, all widows, listed an occupation and probably most of them would have been receiving relief in the form of the 'Widow's Pension'. Of the seven widows living on their own none came from a situation in 1921 which suggests that they would have had any quantity of private resources to live on; four had been living with their husband or married son who had been employees in the fishery, as a casual labourer, or as a carpenter, another's husband had been a tin smith (working on his own account), and another had been a farmer (on what scale cannot be determined, though most likely small).

In eleven of the fourteen households headed by married men, the heads or, in one case, the wife of the head listed both occupation and earnings, while in one case an occupation (farmer) but no earnings are listed. Six of the married male heads either listed themselves as employees, a captain of a costal steamer, a fisherman, a farmer, a wireless operator, and a mail courier. Four of the male heads and the female head reported their employment status as 'self-employed', a fisherman (explicitly fishing the inshore fishery), a carpenter, and two farmers, along with the female head, a hotel keeper. Again the term 'working on own account' seems to have been interpreted rather loosely, as the inclusion of labourers indicates. Not all of the households headed by married men were well off however; three listed no earnings and five listed annual earnings of between $8.00 and $50. Some of the male heads of households may also have been receiving relief as either permanent or casual poor, though any making more than $50 would not, at least by the letter of the law, have been eligible. Only one of those not listing an occupation in 1935 would appear to have been one of those men with "a little money put by" (Bartlett, c. 1930, p. 6), a fisherman and employer in 1921 with a home valued at about twice the average value. While some may have been receiving help from children, only two of them have identifiable children in the community, one married with two children and earning $20 for the year and the other married with six children and earning $45 and so neither would seem to have been in a position to provide much nor would their presence in the community have precluded their parents receiving relief. For many, probably most, of these individuals government support would have been a necessary component of their household incomes.

Despite the variation within this group, it would again appear that overall the elderly living on their own were probably relatively well off in comparison at least to other aged individuals and again this would at least suggest that independent residential arrangements were the preferred one among the aged.

3. 1945 census

In 1945, 22% (n = 25) of the aged resided alone or with only their spouse, including one household with a domestic servant and one with a boarder, in 16 households (see Table 3.9). This represented a return to 1921 levels. All but one of these individuals were either married or widowed (the single individual was not a priest). Five were living alone, four men—three widowers and an unmarried individual—and two women—a widow on her own and another keeping a boarder; while 19 individuals were living with their spouse in ten households—in one case with a servant as well. While only eight of those living alone or with only their spouse had clearly identifiable children living in the community at the time, a further seven of them had children listed on at least one of the previous censuses, three had grandchildren resident with them on one of the previous censuses, and six appeared on previous censuses and there is no evidence of them having any children. Two appeared on the 1945 census for the first time and so it is impossible to know if they might have had children elsewhere, one was married and the other a widow.

Looking backwards to the 1935 census we see that those living alone or with a spouse only came from a number of different family types; again, most commonly these individuals had been living with unmarried children (48%, n = 11) or alone or with a spouse only (n = 5, 22%) in 1935; this included the one individual with a boarder, who had been resident in the same household in 1935. While the rest had been living with married children (4%, n = 1), married children and grandchildren (9%, n = 2), with an older sister (4%, n = 1), with grandchildren (13%, n = 3), and two were not in the previous census. The ages of individuals living on their own in 1945 again gives evidence of the probability of individuals living on their own increasing at least until sometime after age 80.

Perhaps the most notable change between this and the 1921 and 1935 censuses is the lack of difference between households headed by married individuals over 64 years of age and households headed by single and widowed individuals in the same age group in terms of their listing occupations and associated earnings. All but one from each group was listed either as 'retired' (ten household heads including one who listed his occupation as 'Gentleman' and interviews indicate that he was retired) or not listed as having an occupation (four including the two households headed by widows). However, the backgrounds of those households headed by married individuals suggest that they were generally better off than were those headed by widowed individuals or single men. None of the latter's previous occupations and work statuses suggest relative affluence or independence and all had been employees on the previous censuses listed as either fishing servants or casual labourers, while their reported annual household earnings in 1935 had ranged between $2.00 and $25 (average of $14). Meanwhile, of the ten married heads of households four had been professionals or employers—a merchant, a clergyman, and two Labrador planters—with the six who had been employees—three fisherman, a carpenter, and a casual labourer—averaging $174 annual household earnings in 1935 (excluding one who did not list either occupation or earnings). One of the two household headed by widows would seem to have been among the better off households, with one widow being listed as a boarding house keeper in 1935 and having individual and household earnings of $200 and $480—her late husband had been a government official and she may have been receiving a pension as a result of that. The head of the other appears on the census for the first time in 1945.

The economic bases of these households seems to have changed dramatically from previous censuses. While in 1921 and 1935 the majority of male heads of households had listed an occupation, only two of 14 did so in 1945. Most (nine of 14) male household heads listed themselves as retired. The two heads who did list an occupation, a widowed fisherman (listed age 65, actual age 78, using the year of birth given in 1921 to determine such) working on his own account with individual (and household) earnings of $100 for the year and a married 'general' labourer (age 70), and employee, earning $600, had earnings well below the average individual earnings of $814 and the average household earnings of $1103.

With the majority of individuals reporting neither occupation nor earnings, most of these individuals would have looked towards government for their support. Using estimated annual incomes (calculated using the same logic as for 1935) the relative decline in the incomes of the elderly between 1935 and 1945 becomes evident. The average estimated individual earnings of household heads were $106 and average estimated household earnings were $130 for those living alone or with only their spouse, while the equivalent figures for the population as a whole were $622 and $972. On a per household member basis, aged individuals living on their own averaged estimated earnings per person of $78 as opposed to the overall average of $222.

While, as outlined above, using estimated earnings probably underestimates, to some unknown extent, the incomes of those not reporting any earnings, the downward trend in the relative incomes of the aged is clear and most evident among those living on their own. This would have been especially the case for those dependent on government support, even if in absolute terms they may have been somewhat better off. However, with the increases in the cost of living which had occurred between 1935 and 1945, even those living off of savings or private pensions would have seen at least their relative, and probably their absolute, standard of living fall.

In sum; the findings that the likelihood of the aged living on their own increased with age until individuals reached late old age (80+) and that those aged living on their own seem to have been in general economically better off both suggest that nuclear family residence was the preferred pattern. These findings also suggest that the most common reason for multi-generational households was the reincorporation of the old-old into pre-existing nuclear families.

C. The Elderly Living With Children

Many elderly individuals remained as the heads of households, with or without a spouse, and living with unmarried and, or, married children in two generation families.

1. 1921 census

In 1921 there were 31 individuals 65 years of age and older, representing 24% of those over 64, (see Table 3.9) living in 24 households (including two with domestic servants as well). These were generally relatively small households, averaging of 3.6 persons per household (see Table 3.11). The most common household was made up of a couple or a widowed individual and one unmarried child, 11 of 24; six households had two or more unmarried child at home; four households contained a married child and spouse at home; and two contained both married and unmarried children. In 1921 none of the unmarried children were classified as the head of the household. Six individuals, all widowed, were living with married children; in only two cases were the children listed as the heads of households, both living with their elderly mothers. In a significant portion of the families with unmarried children those children were clearly still at home due to age (average age 27), with the youngest child of an individual over 64 being four months old (father 67, mother 53) and in one third of these families there were children twenty years of age and under at home. The age of the married children on the other hand was considerably older (mean age 43). Among those with married children at home two also had unmarried children at home. In no households were two married children living at home and in the one household with married and unmarried children at home in which the elderly head is found in the next census, it was the unmarried daughter who remained at home while the married child had gone on to establish his own household.

Those households with elderly individuals living with children (but with no grandchildren present) can essentially be divided into two groups: 1) those in which younger children could be seen to live with parents on an essentially temporary basis, basically until the children married and established households of their own and 2) those which represent a more permanent living arrangement, in which a single or married child continued to live with an aged parent, and who either did not marry or did not have children—for reasons probably unrelated to their residence choices, though those in the latter group would all have once been in the former. The aged heads of the households, along with the two widows who were not listed as the heads of their households, who fit into the second group (12 of 24 households) were, not surprisingly, generally older than those in the former group (average age of 80 versus 70). In all of the households fitting into the latter group there was only one child present whereas nine of the former had more than one child present. What percentage of the second group actually represent long term care of permanently dependent children by elderly parents cannot be determined, though on the later censuses at least one household fit this pattern.

Looking forward, very few of these individuals were to be found in the 1935 census or were probably still living. All five remaining individuals were living with some of the same unmarried children in 1935 while all the children who had married since 1921 had established their own residences. Two of the families still living with unmarried children in 1935 were representative of the Brigus *elite* with unmarried daughters. These single women would have had more economic independence than most in Brigus and probably not unrelated to that they may have found *suitable* marriage partners difficult to find in the community. Among those living with married children, with one exception, none could be said to be members of the Brigus elite with all but one of the sons being employed as fishermen or general labourers and all being employees. The exception was a telegraph operator—which would have put him in the middle class of Brigus society—

listed as head, living with his widowed mother. In 1921 there was an indication that in the older age groups individuals were less likely to live with unmarried children though the pattern is not particularly strong (see Table 3.9), and this doubtless simply reflects the fact that most children could be expected to marry at some time in their life (see Table 3.12). Again it would appear that the norm of household development followed neolocal residence patterns.

Among those over 64 living with unmarried children the majority of male heads of households, 13 of 18, listed an occupation, while none of the women, heads or wives of heads, listed an occupation. In the six households with children less than 20 years of age all of the male heads listed an occupation and the average age of those heads was just under 70. The occupations listed by the heads of these six households were varied, one was a fisherman and an employer (i.e., a planter), one was an insurance agent, while the remaining four were clearly working class, two being carpenters (and employees), one was a fishing servant (i.e., a fisherman and an employee), and one was a carter and small scale farmer. Those male heads of households not listing an occupation were generally older—average age 83 versus 71 for those listing an occupation—and all lived with only one child, in one case married—with the average age of those children being close to fifty. While two of the male heads listed an occupation their age and occupations suggest that they would have been dependent on the earnings of their children at home for their maintenance: one, aged 90 and a widower, listed himself as a casual labourer and cobbler while his married son, age 55, listed labourer (though in the next census he was listed as a cobbler); the other, aged 74 and married, gave his occupation as farmer while his unmarried son, age 38, was a sailor on a steamer. In the remaining households with aged individuals not listing an occupation their sons engaged in a variety of occupations, from casual labourers to merchants and large scale planters.

In five households only the over 64 year old head listed an occupation while in nine households both parents and children listed an occupation. Where the main source of earnings came from in these households cannot be ascertained, though it is likely, from their listed occupations, that in four of these households the earnings of the children were a supplement to those of their parents. In one household it was likely that the son's earnings were the main source of income, though if the 90 year old head was receiving an Old Age Pension, that may have been a major income source. In the remaining four it is uncertain who was the dominant earner: in one household neither parents nor daughter listed an occupation and the main source of income was probably government support, likely an Old Age Pension paid to the 86 year old head, while in the remaining ten households only the children list an occupation, with six of the aged individuals being widows—very few, two of 61, widows of any age listing an occupation. The lack of data on earnings makes the determination of whether the aged in these households were economically dependent on their children, or vice versa, practically difficult, there is little strong evidence arguing one way or the other.

2. 1935 census

In 1935 there were 41 elderly individuals living with married (n = 4) and unmarried (n = 37) children, 31% of those over 64, (see Table 3.9) living in 33 households. The increase in the proportion living with unmarried children over the period from 1921 to 1935 was mostly at the expense of the numbers living with married children and grandchildren. In the same period there seems to have been a delay in marriage. The average age of unmarried children in the households headed by individuals over 64[28] rose from 26.5 years of age to 29.0. At the same time, as can be seen in Table 3.12, only 12% of those aged 20 to 25 (n = 114) in 1935 were either married or widowed, whereas 37% had been so (n = 96) in 1921.

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[28] In 1935 there were two households where the head was under 65 while the wife of the head was over 65. These households will be treated and referred to as being headed by individuals over 65.

As in 1921, in all the cases where children were single the elderly individuals were the heads of the household or the spouse of the head. Again, as in 1921, in a significant portion of these families the unmarried children were quite young (average age 29) and almost two thirds of the households (n = 23) contained children 20 years of age or younger. Looking back to the 1921 census, virtually all of those over 64 years of age living with unmarried children in 1935 had been living with unmarried children (97%, n = 35) when most had been younger than 65 (89%, n = 31). The other individual had been living with a probably newly married child and an unmarried children, by 1935 the married children had established separate residences while one unmarried child remained at home. One individual had not been on the 1921 census.

As in the previous census, representatives of the Brigus *elite* were over-represented as were working women. In fact most of the women working outside of their homes, other than domestic servants, in those few occupations open to women—two teachers, two telegraph operators, a nurse, and a store clerk—were members of the upper layers of Brigus society; reflected in both their individual earnings, averaging $238—well above the overall average individual earnings of $145—and their family backgrounds. The employed sons on the other hand were mostly fishermen and general labourers, though one was a government worker (as was his father); and none were the brothers of the working women.

The division between those households with elderly individuals living with children, but with no grandchildren, on an essentially permanent basis and those in which younger children could be seen to live with parents on a more temporary basis is less clear cut than it appeared in 1921. Single individuals seem to have virtually never established households separate of their parents and with more children delaying marriage, more single individuals seem to have remained at home and to have stayed there to an older age.

Nonetheless, retrospectively it is clear that the division held, with no more than one child in each household remaining with their parents in the next census and with other children either disappearing from the census or marrying and establishing separate households within the community. At least one of the long term cases of co-residency represented care of a permanently dependent child by aging parents and doubtless there were others.

Looking forward, in 1935, as in 1921, for very few of these elderly individuals was this multi-generational family structure to be a long term living arrangement. By 1945, of the eleven individuals who had been residing with unmarried children in 1935 who can be identified on the 1945 in only five cases were the individuals still residing with their still unmarried children. In at least one case the unmarried child was "an imbecile" and "a great source of worry and responsibility to these old people" (Newfoundland Department of Public Welfare, 1949, file #272). This couple's married son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren were also resident in Brigus though they emigrated to Canada sometime between 1946 and 1949. The remaining six individuals also remained heads of their households with one widowed individual living alone, one couple alone without children, another couple alone with a servant, while one lived with a step-son and that step-son's wife and step children. There is no discernable age pattern for those living with unmarried children in 1935 (see Table 3.9). Of the four elderly individuals living with married children in 1935, three remained in the 1945 census: one was now living with an unmarried child, age 22, who had also been living with them in 1935; the second was living with married grandchildren and great-grandchildren who had not been on the previous census and the married children she had previously been living with were still living, without any children, in the community; while the third individual was living with the same adopted married child as she had been in 1935, was widowed, and was no longer listed as head.

In 1935, as in 1921, among those over 64 living with children the majority of male heads of households, 18 of 27, listed an occupation, while none of the women, heads or wives of heads, listed an occupation. None of the widowed heads of households listed an occupation while three quarter of the marred heads did—two of the married male heads were under 65 but married to women over 65—and those married male heads listing an occupation were younger than those married and widowed male heads who did not (average ages of 67, 76, and 74 respectively). All but one of those who listed a occupation also gave annual earnings with average individual earnings of $173 and average household earnings of $244 which were above the average household earnings of $233 and the average individual earnings of $145 of the community as a whole. The average estimated household earnings for those living with children but no grandchildren was $192, while the equivalent figure for the population as a whole was $201, however, on a per household member basis the average estimated earnings per person were quite similar with an average of $52 as opposed to the overall average of $49. On a household basis, in five households only the over 64 year old head listed an occupation and earnings and in a further eight households while both parents and children list an occupation, the main source of earnings were the over 64 year old head. In five households both parents and children worked but the main source of earnings were the children and in a further eight households only the children list earnings and occupations. In sum, elderly individuals living with children in two generation households were not very different from the average household and in so far as there was economic dependence in these families it was as much the young on the old as the old on the young.

3. 1945 census

In 1945 there were 55 individuals over 64 years of age living with unmarried (n = 44) and married (n = 11) children (see Table 3.9) living in 36 and 9 households respectively. The increase in the proportion living with unmarried children over the period from 1921 to 1945 was mostly at the expense of the numbers living with children and grandchildren and probably due to the delay in marriage which was the result of the Second World War, when many of the single children at home were in military service or actually working away from the community. While the percentage of those ever-married age 20 to 25 had risen from 1935, though not to the level of 1921, the percentage of those ever-married still lagged behind in the 25 to 30 years age group (see Table 3.12). In 1945 six of the sons with a listed occupation were either in the military or working on one of the military bases. Other children, while still listed as living at home, clearly were in the process of moving out of the household and the community, e.g., two of the children were working as miners in the central Newfoundland community of Buchans. As in previous censuses, in a significant portion of these families the unmarried children were young (average age 26)—with individuals over 64 living with children as young as four months old—in over 30% (n = 11) of these families there were children twenty years of age and younger at home. Looking backwards we find that most (80%, n = 35) of the individuals living with unmarried children had been living with their unmarried children in 1935 and most had been less than 65 years of age at the time (68%, n = 30). Five individuals had been living with married children and grandchildren in the previous census and all of them had been 65 years of age or younger at the time and all had also been living with unmarried children, and it was these unmarried children who were the ones who remained in 1945. Once again there is no discernable age pattern for those living with unmarried children in 1945 (see Table 3.9).

As with those elderly living on their own, the economic bases of these households seems to have changed, though slightly less dramatically, from the previous censuses, with only 35% (12 of 34) of the heads of households over 64 listing an occupation, whereas in 1921 and 1935 the majority of male heads of households had listed an occupation. Most male household heads listed themselves as retired—19 of 34, plus one listing himself as a

"Invalid". The most consistent characteristic of those listing an occupation was age, only one was over 70 and two thirds were either 65 or 66 years of age. Five listed their occupations as labourers, four as fishermen, two as farmers, and one a carpenter. While their average individual earnings, $483, were well below the average individual earnings of $814 their average household earnings of $925 was closer to the average of $1,103, due to the earnings of sons still at home. This is highlighted by the fact that the household earnings of those families where the aged individuals did not list an occupation were not substantively lower, average $907, than those that did. In 1935 the earnings of male heads of households over 64 was 2.7 times that of their sons while in 1945 the earnings of male heads of households over 64—fewer of whom were working—had sunk to 45% of their sons earnings.

The majority of households where the members over 64 reported neither occupation nor earnings would seem to have been dependent on the earnings of children—17 households on one son, four on more than one son, three on a daughter, and one on both a son and a daughter. While in theory the elderly could not receive either the Old Age Pension or the 'Widow's Pension' if they had children who could support them, even in the most minimal fashion, it is clear that many did. However, the amount they would have received from the Old Age Pension or the 'Widows' Pension' had declined in value relative to the average annual earnings of their employed children.

In the seven households with no individuals reporting an occupation at least five would have been dependent on government for their support since they came from backgrounds with little prospect of having put by any significant savings. All but one of these households were headed by individuals 75 years of age and older and so in all probability were receiving the Old Age Pension. In one case an elderly couple was receiving the Old Age Pension while their unmarried daughter, age 43, was probably receiving a disability pension of $60 a year, as she was by 1948, so their combined earnings were $180 a year. For the rest while the Old Age Pension may have risen to $72 for an individual and $120 for a couple, from $50 for both in 1935, this increase was far below the almost 500% increase in the average household earnings between 1935 and 1945 among households as a whole in Brigus.

In sum, across all three censuses, while significant numbers of aged individuals lived with children—many of whom were young—this most often was a prelude to those children marrying and forming their own neolocal households and separate economic units, much as one would find today, rather than the prelude to bringing a spouse into an extended or stem household in the case of sons, or marrying into one in the case of daughters. The biggest difference between Brigus in the period from 1920-1949 and today, and the explanation for much of the intergenerational coresidence, was the virtual absence of single individuals moving away from home before marriage, other than in the process of working outside of the community. This again suggests that nuclear family residence was the preferred household system and that where multi-generational households did exist it was on the basis of a nuclear reincorporation household system.

D. The Elderly Living With Children and Grandchildren

If we are to find the extended, three or four-generation family, within which production and reproduction (including care of the elderly) took place, then we should find examples in those households where we find the elderly living with children and grandchildren. We would expect such households to continue over time, rather than being simply a temporary stage before children establish their own nuclear families, and to be structured around shared productive activity, rather than simply being the site of the shared consumption of pooled individual production.

A significant minority of the elderly lived with children and grandchildren across all three censuses. Households with the necessary three generational structure were, not surprisingly, most commonly found among households which included individuals 65 years of age and older—85% of three or more generational households included individuals over 64 in them in 1921 and 71% and 76% included them in 1935 and 1945 respectively. Were these household arrangements based on household production with the power and prestige of the aged tied to their control of productive property or were they more like Kertzer's (1995) nuclear reincorporation households, for example, the households nineteenth century industrial England based on shared poverty and the need to pool resources in order to survive (Anderson, 1972)?

1. 1921 census

In 1921 40% of those 65 years of age and older, representing 52 individuals, and composing 43 households, lived with both children (ever-married,[29] n = 44, and unmarried, n = 8) and grandchildren (see Table 3.9). It is sometimes impossible to determine if some or all of the grandchildren present are also the children of the children present where the elderly person was the head of the household.

As with households without grandchildren present, in 1921 none of the unmarried children were classified as the head of the household or the spouse of the head. In those households with individuals over 64 living with married children and grandchildren 58% (n = 25) of those individuals were listed as heads of households while 42% (n = 18) were not. By definition households of this type would include a minimum of four individuals in the case of married children and three in the case of unmarried children, the actual average size was 6.4 for the former and 3.9 for the latter.

The elderly living with children and grandchildren fall into three fairly distinct sub-types. First there were those living with unmarried children and grandchildren, all of who were listed as the head of the household. Second, were those living with ever-married children and grandchildren with the children, i.e., a son or a son-in-law, listed as the head. Finally there were those elderly living with ever-married children and grandchildren, with the elderly individuals listed as the head of the household.

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[29] As the focus of this study is the condition of the aged, for the purposes of this analysis the children defining the household type are classified as 'ever-married' if they are either widowed, separated, or married.

Among those elderly persons living with unmarried children and grandchildren in 1921 three households would seem to have been made up of single children and grandchildren born out of wedlock (in one case explicitly so). In all three households the only individual in the household with a listed occupation was a daughter working as a domestic servant or charwomen while living with their parents and children.[30] The other three were made up of single children and children of other children not present in the household and seemingly not in the community. These households do not show any evidence of household production and their structure would seem to be the result of short term accommodations to individual setbacks, such as children unable to support their own children and illegitimacy. The economic basis of these households were varied. The three households with daughters working in domestic service probably depended at least as much on some form of government relief, paid to the parents, or on child support,[31] as on the very limited wages paid to most domestic servants. The other households varied, with one household dependent on the earnings of a planter son, and so probably relatively well off, another on the always variable wages of three fishing servants—father, son, and grandson—while another had only a sixteen year old son, listed as a casual labourer, and so probably received at least as much from the 'Widow's Pension' to which she was eligible as from her son's probably very limited wages.

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[30] One informant made it clear that pregnancy was a not uncommon outcome of domestic service.

[31] The magisterial courts seem to have fairly readily granted child support in bastardy/affiliation (the term changed around 1940) cases, with all cases brought before the court in Brigus found for the plaintiff (i.e., the mother) in the 1920-1950 period. However, how often this was undertaken as a required step in obtaining permanent relief (rather than in the expectation of actually getting maintenance from the father of the child) is unclear.

There were 18 households in 1921 in which there were elderly individuals, living with ever-married children and grandchildren, with those children listed as the heads of the household— 13 sons, five daughters. In those households all but two of the elderly individuals were widows, average age 76, while the two widowers who were listed as not being the heads of the household were 76 and 79 years of age. The most common relationship of the elderly person was mother of the male head— 11 households—while in five of the households the elderly person was the mother-in-law of the male head. The two widowers, not listed as heads, were both fathers of the head of the household. All of these households would seem to have been dependent on the earnings of children and, in a few cases, grandchildren— 10 households on one son, four on sons-in-law, and two on both a son and a grandson. While there is no measure of earnings on the 1921 census, the sons and sons-in-law in this group were generally about twice as likely to be employers as were individuals over fifteen years of age from the population as a whole, though the numbers are so small as to make the relationship tentative. As well a relatively large number of planters were found in this group, with planters actually outnumbering common fishermen.

What ever the actual movement of individuals was—whether the widowed elderly person moved in with their children or the children took over the home of their widowed parent—the central point to these household arrangements would seem to have been the reincorporation of widowed elderly individuals, presumably no longer able to care for themselves even with the aid of public relief, into existing nuclear families. Looking forward only one of these elderly individuals is to be found in the 1935 census, which is not surprisingly considering their average ages. An example highlights the generally dependent position of the widowed elderly who were not listed as heads of households. In one case a widow, 86 years of age, had moved from her married son's household, sometime after his death, to live with a married daughter, her husband, and eight grandchildren, along with the aunt of her son-in-law, age 78. Her new family may have 'taken her in' because they were, by the standards of the period, very well off with her son-in-law, a farmer, reporting an annual earnings of $2,500—the largest amount listed in a community with average annual earnings $144 for men and even the local physician reporting less than $1,000. Meanwhile her widowed daughter-in-law and grandchildren still lived in the community, and had no reported earnings—though she would have been eligible for relief as a widow.

There were 19 households in 1921 in which there were elderly individuals listed as the heads of the household, living with ever-married children and grandchildren—16 sons, two daughters, and a widowed daughter-in-law—though in one case the grandchild was clearly not the child of the married children present but rather was the child of another child. In a significant number of these households it would appear that the presence of ever-married children in the home might have been a temporary situation for newly wedded individuals. In three households the grandchildren present are all under one year of age and the elderly present are not living with the same family in the next census. In two dwellings there were families made up of an older married couple their married son and daughter-in-law and a grandchild of less than one year of age. In both these cases, in the next census the original wife of the head had been widowed and no longer was listed as the head of the household. It is not clear if the family remained intact over the intervening years, or if the three generational family was reconstituted with the death of the original head of the household. A further four households contained a married child with one or two children three years of age or less with none of these families continuing in their three generational form into the next census.

The remaining nine households showed a greater probability of representing the sort of three-generation or four-generation extended family, serving as the locus of both consumption and production, supposedly characteristic of *traditional* societies. However, in four of these households, while there are three, and in one case, four generations, there would seem to have been little basis for family production. Two households were composed of older widows, 85 and 75 years of age, living with married children and it is not obvious how these differed from otherwise similar households where the elderly widow's son or son-in-law was listed as head. However, one informant claimed that, at least in some of the cases that he could identify, this was because in the households with the widows listed as heads the children had moved back into the dwelling owned by their widowed parent—though without the ability to identify actual dwellings across censuses this cannot be tested and, in any case, the determination of headship is probably complex. Another of these households was headed by a widower 86 years, with this four generational household remaining together across all three censuses, though not on the basis of shared productive activity. In this household the married son of the head was working as a labourer in central Newfoundland, while his married son, the head's grandchild, worked as crew member for a planter at the Labrador. In the next census the married grandchild was working in a whaling factory outside of Brigus, as he was in 1945. Another household was composed of a married couple, ages 66 and 65, with the head listed as a farmer and 'carman' (i.e., a carter, this combination, small scale farming and essentially casual labour, was a fairly common 'old man's' occupation), his married son, a carpenter, daughter-in-law, their child, and the head's brother, age 63, working as a casual labourer. Again this household survived into the next census, though the original head had died and his son, still a carpenter and the sole wage earner, had become the head. In all of these households, while there was doubtless pooled consumption and production for household use, there was nothing like 'family production' with "the family provid[ing] the fundamental organization of the work process" (Sider, 1986, p. 21).

The four remaining households at least admit the possibility of something like 'family production'. The best example of a household fitting the model of the *traditional* family fishery was a household composed of a man, listed as head, and his wife, both of 67 years old, their son and daughter-in-law, aged 41 and 42, three grandchildren, aged 16, 10, and 7, and a niece of the married children, aged 9 (her relation to the head of the dwelling is unclear). The head, his son, and the eldest grandson all listed themselves as fishing in the local inshore fishery, representing three of the four in total listing themselves as fishing in that fishery.[32] The household head listed himself as an employer, while his son and grandson listed themselves as employees, most probably of their father/grandfather. The other three households, though also with two generations involved in the sort of economic activities which could support 'family production', are probably better understood as an aspect of property inheritance within the planter class. One of these households was composed of a male household head, aged 69, whose occupation was listed as the Labrador fishery and recorded as an employer along with a married son, who also worked in the Labrador fishery and was listed as an employee. The two remaining households present a slightly less clear cut pattern. For both cases the elderly male heads of the households, aged 76 and 77, one married and the other a widower, reported fishing as their occupation while working 'on own account' (see Chapter 2 for discussion of this term), meanwhile their married sons, also fishermen, report being employers; while none of the grandchildren were old enough to work. It is highly unlikely that these household heads would serve as their sons' servants and this probably represents the process of former planters passing on their productive property (Labrador station, cod trap, boats, etc.) to their sons (who took on the role of employer of non-family labour, composing the bulk of the crew), while still helping in the enterprise, on something like a voluntary basis, being neither planter nor servant. Nicholas Smith (1936, pp. 190-195) describes a similar process for himself in 1934, when he was 71, when he went down to Labrador with his son-in-law who was living with him at the time (Smith had no sons).

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[32] Listed as "Shore cod" in the census, as opposed to the Labrador fishery, the much more important fishery in Brigus. In the 1920 fishery, shore cod accounted for just 3% of the dried cod fish produced by Brigus fishing crews and this is an increase from earlier years, with shore cod accounting for less than 1% of the total catch in 1901 and .01% in 1891 (there was a bank fishery out of Brigus in 1891, though its inclusion does not change this figure (Colonial Secretary's Office [Newfoundland], 1923; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1903; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1893). The increase is explained more by the decline in the Labrador fishery than by the increase in the shore fishery.

Overall the men—fathers, sons/sons-in-law, and grandsons—in this group were only marginally more likely to be found to be employers than were found in the population as a whole—though again the numbers are small—and the range of occupations does not stand out as very different than the population as a whole. While planters were slightly over-represented in this group, 14% of the group as opposed to 8% of the over fifteen year old male population as a whole, they were still outnumbered by common fisherman by a factor of almost three to one. Among these families only three, headed by two planters aged 67 and 69 and a mailman aged 65, would seem to have been economically dependent on the elderly heads. In the other households either the aged head did not list an occupation or it was probable that they worked on an intermittent and reduced basis, working as small scale farmers, carters, and local inshore fishermen. In these households it was the earnings of sons and sons-in-law which was probably the primary income source of the household.

2. 1935 census

In 1935 there were 32 individuals 65 years of age and older, representing 24% of those over 64 (see Table 3.9) and composing 28 households, living with both children and grandchildren; all but one were with married children. This would seem to represent a significant drop in the numbers of elderly living with children and grandchildren. While the numbers are not large, the greatest drop would appear to have taken place among those aged 65-69—from 32% of those in that age group in 1921 to 21% in 1935. If that was the case then it fits with the explanation that the decline was due to the postponement of marriage in response to the economic depression of the 1930s, outlined above. Among those over 64 living with ever-married children and grandchildren 53% (n = 17) were listed as heads of households while 47% (n = 15) were not. The average size of the households was 6.9 individuals for those living with ever-married children and grandchildren while the household with unmarried children and grandchildren contained six individuals.

The single household with unmarried children and grandchildren in 1935, was made up of the older couple, aged 73 and 63, living with two single children, and two grandchildren of children not present in the household and seemingly not in the community (probably of a son listed on the 1921 census). The head of this household was a blacksmith, working on own account, and his earnings of $30, plus what ever the parents of the children may have sent, would seem to have been the main income source of the household.

The most consistent characteristic of the 14 households in 1935 in which there were elderly individuals living with ever-married children and grandchildren—11 married sons, one widowed son, and two married daughters—where the elderly individuals were not listed as the heads of the household, was that all the elderly individuals were widows. As in 1921, the average age of these widows, was 76. The most common pattern, found in nine of these 14 households, was for the elderly widow to be found living as the spouse of the head in 1921 with the same son, in four cases married at the time, who was listed as the head of the household in 1935. In all of these cases it seems likely that the households were residing in the same physical dwelling as they had been in 1921.

In the five remaining households the elderly widow had not been listed as the head or spouse of the head of the household she was living in 1935. In all of these cases the head of the household in 1935 had been in a different household in 1921. In 1921 one widow had been listed as the wife of the head and living with her single daughter and probably illegitimate grandchild and by 1935 it would seem that she had moved in with her married son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren who had been living nearby in 1921, though who made the physical move is not clear. Another elderly widow had moved to, or back to, Brigus to live with her daughter and son-in-law. Another continued to live with the same son and daughter-in-law and grandchild, plus two born in the interim, as she had in 1921 with her son continuing to be listed as the head of the household. The sole person over 64 year old living with children and grandchildren in 1921 still found in the 1935 census and mentioned above, had moved from her deceased son's to live with her married daughter's large family. Finally, another widow, living with her widowed son and grandchildren, had been living with her husband and an unmarried daughter in 1921, while the son, and head of the household in 1935, was living separately with his family. In the latter instance the family was most likely reconstituted in its 1935 form after the death of the original head of the household. Looking forward only two of these elderly individuals are to be found in the 1945 census. One was then listed as the head of the household and living with one of the grandchildren, aged 23, she had previously been living with and with either an unrelated individual or one whose relationship is not given. The elderly widow who had been living with her widowed son in 1935 was, in 1945, living with the, then widowed, wife of her late son, listed as head, and the same grandchildren as she had in 1935.

As in 1921, all of these households would seem to have been dependent on the earnings of children and, in a few cases, grandchildren— 10 households on one son, four on a son-in-law, and two on both a son and a grandson. Either due to government employment schemes during the depression or to the method of census taking, a significant number of individuals who were employers, identified either from other sources or from previous censuses, were not classified as such. However, work earnings were recorded and as a result household earnings can be calculated. The average reported individual earnings of the heads of these households, the sons and sons-in-law of the elderly widows, in this group, $330, were notably higher than the individual job earnings of the heads of households as a whole, $190, with the average household earnings, $365, and the average estimated household earnings, $379, also being notably higher than the community as a whole (with averages of $201 and $219 respectively), at least suggesting that the care of an aged parent was falling on the children with the greatest economic resources.

There were 13 households in 1935 in which there were elderly individuals listed as the heads of the household, living with ever-married children and grandchildren— 10 with sons, in one case with two married sons, and three with daughters, one of who was widowed. One of these households would seem to have been the result of a widowed daughter and her children moving back to live with her parents after the death of her husband. In 1921 the elderly couple had been living with other unmarried children, aged 17 and 20, while the then married daughter seems to have been living away from the community.

Fewer of the households found in the 1935 census would appear to contain married children as a temporary situation for newly wedded individuals. However, one household, which on the face of it would appear to fit the character of a multi-generational extended family, probably did represent that sort of temporary situation. This was the household of a widow of 65, listed as the head of the household, who was living with two unmarried sons, a married son and his family, consisting of his wife and three young (<3 years) children, and another married son and his family, his wife and child four months old. This is the only household in any of the censuses in which one finds two nuclear families, both including children, of the same generation in a single dwelling. In the previous census this widow had been the head of a family of six sons, all unmarried, with one working in central Newfoundland and living in Brigus only part of the year. By 1935 the eldest son was no longer in the community while the second oldest had established a separate household; living with his wife and four children. In 1945, this woman remained living with her two remaining unmarried sons and was no longer listed as head, while her married sons had established their own households. It is clear that this extended, at least at the moment of the census in 1935, household was not held together by either family production or by property. Her three sons listing an occupation were all labourers at "odd jobs" and their earnings were $11, $6, and $16, representing a very small household earnings, even when the amount their mother was probably receiving in permanent poor relief—her 'Widow's Pay'—was added to that. It was probably not a coincidence that her two married sons who had established their own households in 1945 reported annual earnings of $500 and $400, one as a general labourer and the other a worker in the whale fishery.

The remaining 12 households showed a greater probability of representing the three or four-generation extended family supposedly characteristic of *traditional* societies. Again, however, in seven of these households, while there are three generations resident in one household and the household stayed together across two or more censuses, there is virtually no evidence of family based production. All of these households were based on the pooled consumption of wage labourers sometimes supplemented by small scale agriculture. In all of these households, while there was doubtless pooled consumption and limited production for household use, there was nothing like families serving as the basis of the work organization. Four households were dependent on the wages of one worker each—three working as employees in the Labrador fishery and one in the whale fishery—with annual household earnings of, $15, $75, $80, and $100 respectively, plus what ever they received in relief and they might produce in their garden. Three households contained two income earners but in none of them were the two earners engaged in the same industry. One household was made up of a 71 year old former fishing servant, listed as head and with no reported occupation in 1935, his wife, listed as 50 age on the 1935 census, but, from other censuses, actually 60, who was employed in a tea room and earning $70 and was the only married woman with an occupation listed in the 1935 census, other than a boarding house keeper, and their son who was employed as a fisherman at Labrador and earning $60, his wife, and their infant twin sons. Another household was composed of a former railway worker of 68 who listed his occupation in 1935 as farmer (with no reported earnings), his wife aged 54, and his son who was also a railway employee.

Three further households, again while containing three generations within them, probably represent children residing in the house with their 'retired' parents, in all of these cases retired planters. All three households have as their heads men, who in the 1921 census, had been fishermen in the Labrador fishery and who had been either employers or working on the own account and whose sons or, in one case, son-in-law had also been working in the fishery, in two cases as employees and in the case of the son-in-law as an employer. In the 1935 census none of the aged household heads list themselves as having any occupation. One of these individuals was Nicholas Smith who described his activities during this stage of his life as, "nothing of any importance except general domestic work of attending to coals, water, etc., ... since I retired" (Smith, 1936, p. 191). He did not go fishing in 1935, though in 1934 he did help his son-in-law in his Labrador station, which he had taken over from Smith in 1931.

While Smith's son-in-law was listed as a fisherman working on his 'own account', it is clear from Smith that he was an employer, with no brothers in the community at that time, and with children too young, ages five through ten, to contribute to a Labrador fishing operation. Smith's description (1934, p. 194) almost certainly indicates that they did not go and Smith's own family never went to Labrador with him. One of the sons of another of the 'retired' planters listed his occupation as a farmer raising poultry and he continued with this in 1945. The final household most closely fits the model of household production, albeit of a modified sort. The married son of the elderly head listed himself as a fishermen, working on his 'own account', explicitly in the local shore cod. In the 1945 census this man and his sons were again working at the Labrador fishery in what appears to be a crew.

The remaining two households do seem to show familial productive activity, albeit of a limited sort. One household was composed of a widowed former planter, age 76, and his son and family, father and son both listed as farmers, though only the son lists earnings of $400, indicating more than just a subsistence supplement and putting their household earnings in the top fifth. The other household was composed of another widower, age 68, also a planter on the 1921 census, and his son and family, both father and son were listed as fishermen and employees. In the next census the father is 'retired' and the son, along with many others in the community, had become a carpenter and an employee.

Among these families, in only one household, the aforementioned, would earnings seem to have been equally divided among aged head and children. In the remaining households, either the aged head did not list an occupation or they worked on an intermittent and reduced basis, as small scale farmers, carters, and local inshore fishermen. In these households it was the earnings of sons and sons-in-law which was probably the basic income source of the household. In sum, despite fairly widespread intergenerational coresidence, there is little evidence of extensive family production. Those families headed by individuals over 64 years of age with married or widowed children and grandchildren had average household earnings of $156 and average estimated household earnings of $169, substantively below the average household earnings of $219 and the average estimated household earnings of $201 of all household in the community. All this also suggests that the basis of most of these households was shared poverty rather than shared production.

3. 1945 census

In 1945 there were 23 individuals 65 years of age and older, representing 24% of those over 64 (see Table 3.9) and composing 21 households, living with both ever-married children and grandchildren. This would seem to represent little change in the numbers of elderly living with children and grandchildren as compared to 1935 and clearly no return to the situation found in 1921. Among these 61% (n = 14) were listed as heads of households or the wife of the head while 39% (n = 9) were not. The average size of the households was 6.6 individuals for those living with ever-married children and grandchildren.

As in previous censuses, most households in 1945 in which elderly individuals were not listed as the household head and living with ever-married children and grandchildren were composed of widows and their children. Three lived with married sons, one with a widowed son, two with married daughters, and one with a widowed daughter-in-law. There were also two widowers not listed as the heads of the household living with children and grandchildren and in both cases the son is listed as the owner and head of the household. The average age of the widows was 73 while the two widowers listed their ages as 79 and 73, though calculating the latter's age using the year of birth and age he gave on the 1921 census his actual age was 81; none of the widows ages were off by more than two years. Again looking back to the previous census, most of the elderly individuals had been living in with the same child—in six cases the child had been married at the time, in one case a widow had been living with the same daughter-in-law who had been widowed since then, and in the other the son had still been single at the time. In four of these households the elderly widow had been married and was living with the same children and in the same dwelling in 1935 and had been listed as the wife of the since deceased head of the household. In the two cases involving widowers both had been widowed in the previous census, listed as heads, living with the same married sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren, other than those born in the interim, and in the same dwelling house as they had been in 1935. In two of the three remaining households the household continued in 1945 more or less in their 1935 form, though in one case a widow who had been living in a household headed by her widowed son in 1935 was living with his widowed second wife and her step-children . The final case involved a widow, aged 84, who in 1935 had been living alone with her husband and had moved in with her daughter-in-law's family, probably on the death of her husband.

As in 1921 and 1935, all of the households in which the aged individuals were not listed as the head would seem to have been dependent on the earnings of children and grandchildren—five households on one son, one on a son-in-law, one on both a son and a grandson, one on a son and a grandson and a granddaughter, and, in the case of a widow living with her widowed daughter-in-law, a granddaughter only—along with government support in many cases. Unlike in the two previous censuses, the average reported individual earnings of the heads of these households, i.e., the sons and sons-in-law of the elderly widowed individuals, $925, were not notably higher than the individual job earnings of the heads of all households, $882, nor of other individuals less than 65 years of age, $930, with average household earnings—$1,160 versus $1,103 and $1163 respectively—and estimated household earnings—$1,160 versus $972 and $1,094—also being substantively the same.

There were 10 households in 1945 in which there were elderly individuals listed as the heads of the household, living with ever-married children and grandchildren—eight with married sons, one with a married daughter, and one with a separated daughter. In the case of the separated daughter, she and her child had moved back to live with her parents after her divorce. Shortly after that she moved to St. John's to find work as a domestic servant, though her daughter remained with her grandparents.

The remaining nine households showed a more permanent character but, except for one household, little probability of family based production. Again the economic bases of these households seems to have been the pooled consumption of wage labourers supplemented, though probably to a lesser extent than in 1935 and 1921, by small scale agriculture. As was discussed in more detail above, both household and individual earnings rose dramatically between 1935 and 1945 with average household earnings rising by 494%, from $223 in 1935 to $1,103 in 1945, and individual earnings by 561% from average of $145 to $814. Only two households with elderly individuals living with their children and grandchildren, combined the earnings of more than one individual in 1945 and in only one of these did the elderly head list an occupation. In all others only the sons or sons-in-law listed an occupation with the elderly head listed as 'retired', or in one case, a widow, left blank. In contrast in 1921 13 of 19 such households had more than one employed person in them and in 9 of the 19 the elderly head listed an occupation and with none listed as 'retired', for 1935 the comparable figures were 6 of 13 and 4 of 13, also with none listed as 'retired'.

Few of the occupations listed by any of the members of these households would seem to provide the basis for familial production with the two most common occupations being labourer and carpenter, with six and five, respectively, of the 25 individuals listing an occupation, and none listing themselves as fishermen. Two thirds listed themselves as employees—with two labourers rather inexplicably listing themselves as 'on own account'.

The only household with any evidence for family production was that of a "local" blacksmith, age 68, and his wife, aged 74, living with his unmarried son, aged 40 and also a blacksmith with both working on "own account". Also living with them was a married son aged 33, working as a taxi driver, also on own account, with his wife, aged 30, and their two children. This was the only aged individual in this group listing an occupation, other than 'retired', and any earnings, $400.

Those families headed by individuals over 64 years of age living with married or widowed children and grandchildren had average household earnings of $925 and estimated household earnings of $868, both a bit below the equivalent figures for the community as a whole ($1,103 and $972 respectively) but well above the average household earnings and estimated household earnings ($350 and $130 respectively, though the average household earnings were from only two households) of aged individuals living on their own.

In sum even among three and four-generational households, there is little evidence that the basis of intergenerational coresidence was familial production except in a very limited sense in a very limited number of households and much to suggest that a more common pattern was the reincorporation of the aged into pre-existing nuclear families.

E. The Elderly Living With Other Relatives

One of the theses of GMT is that all senior members of the kin network, including childless uncles and aunts and more distant kin, would normally spend their latter years within the multi-generational household (Laslett, 1976, p. 91). However, such living arrangements were relatively rare in Brigus in the period from 1921 through 1945 and coresidence rarely went beyond the nuclear family plus grandchildren. Where the elderly did live with other relatives the most common arrangement was that of unmarried, widowed, or separated individuals living with their, most often also unmarried or widowed, siblings. A few households involved nieces or nephews living with, and perhaps being unofficially adopted by, unmarried aunts or uncles. Where aged individuals lived with grandchildren, but with the parents of these children not present, it was most often due to the death or emigration of those grandchildren's parents.

1. 1921 census

In 1921 there were only six individuals 65 years of age and older, representing just 5% of those over 64 (see Table 3.9) and living in five households, living with relatives outside of the nuclear family, excepting grandchildren only treated separately below. Three of the households would seem to have been formed by nieces or nephews moving in with unmarried uncles, one case, and aunts, two cases. In two cases the niece and nephew were single and in one the nephew was married and had a child. In two of the households with the unmarried niece and nephew they would seem to have been, at least unofficially, adopted by a maternal aunt and paternal uncle respectively perhaps at a young age. In the case of the nephew both uncle, age 65, and nephew, age 21, had the same first names with the uncle identified as 'Sr.' and the nephew as 'Jr.' In the case of the unmarried aunt, age 70, and her unmarried niece, age 48, in the 1935 census the niece, then living on her own, had changed her family name to that of her deceased aunt. This aunt and her single niece seem to have been working together as dressmakers, though only the aunt is listed as such in 1921 while the niece is in 1935. In both these cases the aunt or uncle was listed as the head of the household, indicating that they were the owner of the dwelling.

The remaining two households would seem to have been formed as the result of unmarried individuals remaining or moving back with their married siblings, in one case a widow, age 80, with her unmarried brother, age 68, in the other an unmarried fisherman (age 75) living with his brothers married son (age 41) and family. Without an earlier census whether or not this was a long term living arrangement cannot be determined.

There were also six individuals 65 years of age and older, representing 5% of those over 64 living in four households and living with grandchildren but with no parents present. One was a case of an elderly widow, age 87, living with her married grandson, age 30, his wife, and their three children, with the grandson listed as head of the household, none found on the next census. The grandson was a sealing captain and clearly a member of the Brigus elite and it is unlikely that his widowed grandmother was receiving government support. In the other three households an elderly widower and two couples were listed as heads living with younger grandchildren, in one case listed as illegitimate. In one of these the grandchild appears to have been working away from the community. None of these individuals are found on the next census.

The small numbers and rather contingent bases of these households make determining their economic bases difficult. In general those living with unmarried siblings only are quite similar to those in which the elderly lived on their own while those living with grandchildren, and in which the elderly were listed as the heads of the household, along with those where nephews or nieces were living with unmarried or widowed aunts or uncles were similar to those where the aged were living with unmarried children.

2. 1935 census

In the 1935 census there were thirteen individuals 65 years of age and older, representing 10% of those over 64 and living in nine households, living with other relatives. The basis of most of these families was unmarried individuals living with married or, much more commonly, unmarried siblings. As was pointed out above, unmarried individuals seem to have never established their own households—though they might end up on their own due to the death of parents—and unmarried individuals seem to have remained with their siblings in the family home occasionally even after those siblings married. As well a number of these households seem to have been formed by individuals returning to Brigus to 'retire' and moving in to live with unmarried siblings.

Three households were composed of unmarried siblings, with all three households being identical to what they had been in 1921. One household was composed of a former teacher, probably retired as she was listed on the next census, living with a sister, age 73, and a brother, age 68 and also a retired teacher. The two sisters were the only aged individuals found in this group to be found in the 1945 census. The other households were composed of an unmarried brother, age 64 and listed as head, and sister, age 72, and two unmarried brothers, aged 60 and 65.

In one household an unmarried man, age 78, was living with his nephew, listed as head, and his wife and two daughters, along with his sister-in-law, age 79 and the nephew's mother. In 1921 he had been living with his married brother, his nephew's father, and his family which included the same nephew and his wife. This is the only household from any of the censuses where unmarried brothers continued to live together with married siblings for any length of time.

Two other household seem to have been formed after the breakdown of marriages. One man, age 75, was separated[33] and in 1935 was living with his brother, age 66, and his family composed of his wife and two sons and a daughter-in-law. He seems to have moved out of his previous home, at least partly, because, "The home he had occupied before ... belonged to his [ex-] wife." (Magisterial Enquiries, 1937, p. 53) Though living with his brother's family he was receiving, or would shortly, the Old Age Pension. Another was composed of a widow, age 65, living with the widowed brother, age 57, of her late husband along with his three children, ages 17 through 25, as they had in 1921.

Finally three households probably were formed by individuals returning to the community after having worked away from it for a number of years. One of those was a married man, age 66, listed as head and his occupation as 'pensioner', and his wife, age 68, who moved back to the community to live with his unmarried sister, age 54, and who had been living alone in 1921. Another household seems to have been an unmarried man, age 73, who had moved back to the home of his married brother, though by 1935 the brother had died and he was living with his widowed sister-in-law, age 68; she was listed as head and her three children seem to have left the community. Finally, there was an unmarried woman, age 78, living with her married nephew and his large family—wife, eight children, along with his wife's mother—who may have been working outside the community, as she is not found on the previous census but was born in Brigus.

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[33] Though he actually listed himself as married, however, his wife listed herself as widowed and in court documents he was described as "living apart from his family for the past eleven years" (Magisterial Enquiries, 1937, p. 53). In the 1921 census he was living with his wife and children.

There were also 6 individuals 65 years of age and older, representing 5% of those over 64 and living in five households living with grandchildren but with no parents present. In all households the grandparents were the heads of the households. It seems very probable that the parents of the grandchildren were not in the community and that the grandchildren were being cared for by their grandparents, as all but one were less than 15 years of age, either because their parents were elsewhere or had died.

3. 1945 census

In the 1945 census there were only two individuals 65 years of age and older living with other relatives, 2% of the aged, living in one household. This household was that of the retired teacher, then aged 74, living with her sister, age 81, found on the previous census discussed above.

There were four individuals 65 years of age and older, representing 4% of those over 64 and living in three households living with grandchildren but with no parents present. One was a case of an elderly, age 85, widow living with her married granddaughter, age 30, and her husband and two children, with the grandson-in-law listed as head of the household. In both 1921 and 1935 she was widowed and living with a married son and his wife and while they remained in the community she seems to have moved in with the child of one of her other children, though why is unknown. The two households with aged heads of the households living with grandchildren were cases of grandchildren continuing to live with their grandparents, one a widow and the other a married couple, after their parents had either left the community or died, in neither case would it appear that the household was dependent on the earnings, with none listed, of the grandchildren present.

F. The Elderly Living With Non-relatives

The elderly living as boarders or as servants, while obviously more common than today (when virtually none do), was not nearly as common as it seems to have been in pre-industrial England (Laslett, 1976, pp. 110-112). As mentioned above, domestic servitude was almost entirely an occupation of young women. Across all three censuses there is only one domestic servant over 64 and she was the only domestic servant over 40 in any year.

While those living with non-relatives were relatively rare, one of the more common 'relationships' within this group, though there was not a specific term for it, was where an individual deeded their property to someone in exchange for their maintenance and discussed in more detail above. These arrangements are of interest because in them much of the logic of coresidence is made explicit. The basis of these arrangements needed to be made explicit, via a written deed or bill of sale, because without such the transmission of the property could be disputed by relatives. Though, as seen above, disputes could also arise between relatives and often property would be deeded to children during the life of an aged person in an attempt to forestall such disputes.

1. 1921 census

In 1921 seven individuals over 64, 5% of those over 64 and in seven households, lived with a variety of non-relatives. One widowed fisherman of 67 lived with two boarders, a married couple of 22 and 19 years of age. Another two, a widow of 70 and a widower of 67, were listed as boarders each living with different families and each was the sole boarder in the household. There was also a female domestic servant of 68 years, working, along with another servant, for a prominent sealing master and planter. Finally there were three aged widows living with others with whom they had no clear relationship. One, an unmarried woman of 73, may have been in the situation of being maintained by the family she was living with in exchange for the deed to her property as the family seems to have been residing in the same dwelling in the next census, when she had disappeared from the census.

2. 1935 census

In 1935 five individuals over 64, representing 4% of those over 64, lived in four households with non-relatives of one sort or another. One individual was an 84 year old nun living in the Roman Catholic convent. Two others were widowers living as boarders. Finally there was an elderly couple, aged 81 for the head of the household and 86 for his wife, living with a family in what would appear to be a property in exchange for maintenance relationship.

3. 1945 census

In the 1945 census again five individuals over 64, representing 4% of the over 64 population, lived in four households with non-relatives. Two households were composed of elderly widows, ages 77 and 79, listed as the heads of the households living with middle-aged, 50 and 58 years of age, single women, both of whom had lived close by in the previous censuses. Other than not being relatives the basis of their relationships are unclear, though they may have served the role of housekeeper. Another household was composed of another older widow, age 69, living in the house of unmarried sisters, and clearly members of the Brigus elite, who were 64 and 51 years of age and operated a "Tea Room", again the basis of their relationships are unclear.

It is clear from other records that the final two households with elderly women in them were based on the understanding, and it would seem likely put into a written contract, that they would be maintained and their property kept in repair. One of the elderly individuals was Bridget Fry, listed as age 87 (though listed as 68 ten years earlier) whose court case was cited above. In 1935 she had been living alone with her husband, age 74, a small scale farmer. She claimed that shortly before his death in 1933 her husband had sold her his 'estate' and that she in turn had sold it to Patrick Morrissey, in return for which she claimed, "that Pat Morrissey was to support and maintain me for my natural life" (Magistrate's Court Northern District Holyrood, 1941), though Morrissey claimed that he was only expected to provide her with fuel. From the dispute it is clear that Mrs. Fry saw the provision of wood for fuel along with the work around her small farm, "fix up her fences and fix up the land for crop," entirely for subsistence it would seem, were the main reasons that she made the arrangement. At the time of the dispute she was living with another family on the same basis as she had arranged with Morrissey and was receiving the 'Widows' Pension' as well. By 1945 she was living with yet another family, composed of 16 individuals who were not related to her, though some of the men in the household were working away from Brigus. She was in all likelihood still receiving her 'Widows' Pension'. Another widow, age 72, was living in a similar arrangement. She had been living alone while receiving her 'Widows' Pension' in 1935 and had taken in the family she was living with sometime around 1940 (Newfoundland Department of Public Welfare, 1949, file #8211).

However, the situation of aged individuals in 1945 would have been at least slightly different than in 1935. In 1935 the $40 from a 'Widows' Pension' or the $50 from an Old Age Pension would have been a significant contribution to household incomes, with average earnings in the community being $145. However, by 1945 the $60 from a 'Widows' Pension' or $72 from an Old Age Pension would have been far less significant relative to average earnings of $814. While the reported value of their dwellings and property had gone up, with recorded house values going from an average of $536 in 1935 to $1176 in 1945, an increase of 119%, their value had not kept up with average earnings which had risen by almost 500%.

IX. Conclusion

In the 1920s through 1940s Brigus was demographically an old community, with an age structure more like modern western societies than the typical characterization of a traditional society. However, like many of the characterizations of traditional societies most elderly men continued to work until well into their seventies and retirement seems to have been relatively rare, or at least 'retirement' was not seen as a normal stage in the life process. Economically the aged would not seem to have been worse off than younger individuals, especially in a situation permitting significant production for use and of minimal perceived needs. However, contrary to GMT's characterization of traditional societies, in many cases the economic situation of the aged was dependent on government support. This support was seem to have generally been considered an entitlement, at least for widow's and the aged who were in need. While this support was small, it was vital to many households, both at stages in the year and of the life span.

The war brought major, though short-term[34], changes to the Newfoundland economy and to the economic situation of the elderly. The war virtually ended unemployment and raised incomes to unprecedented levels, at least for the young. However, for the aged the changes were less positive. The labour force participation rate of men over 64 dropped from 60% in the pre-war period to 25% in 1945. Over the same period the earnings of individuals over 64 went from near parity with those of individuals under 65 to just over 50% of the earnings of younger individuals. When estimated household earnings are compared, households headed by those over 64 also went from near parity to less than 60% of the estimated household earnings of those under 65. One of the main reasons for this was that the rates of government support paid to the aged and to others increased at a much slower rate than did the increase in occupational earnings, rising about 50% as compared to 500% for earnings, and would have, at best, barely kept up with the increases in the costs of basic necessities. While subsistence production was probably important to many, perhaps most, households, it was so for all age groups and there is little evidence that subsistence production increased and some good evidence that it decreased during the war. This decline in the rate of government support was probably only possible because of the suspension of democracy which took place in Newfoundland in 1934.

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[34] As wartime construction inevitably came to an end.

While there may have been changes in the economic situation of the aged over the period studied, there were no fundamental changes in the household or in the living arrangements of the elderly which cannot be explained by short term adjustments to changing political and economic changes, such as the Depression and the Second World War. Across all three censuses significant numbers of the elderly in Brigus lived either on their own or with a spouse only. Most elderly individuals did not live in extended family households and where they did, the economic basis of those households was almost never shared productive activity. Instead the basis of most three and four-generation families/ households was closer to what has been labelled "a nuclear reincorporation household system" (Kertzer, 1995, p. 377) characterized as typical of England and some other areas of north-west Europe, with neolocally formed nuclear families taking in dependent parents—most often widowed mothers—in their late old age. Where three generational households did exist their economic basis was more likely to be shared poverty and the need to pool resources in order to survive.

In sum, neither the extended multi-generational household, posited by the proponents of GMT, nor the "patrilocal and patricentric extended family" often attributed to 'traditional' Newfoundland (Queen & Habenstein, 1974, p. 383) was the situation within which most elderly in Brigus in the first half of the twentieth century found themselves. Instead Brigus was marked by neolocal residence and the predominance of the nuclear family as the basic domestic group which as Laslett (1984) argues is a general feature of northwest Europe. Collective institutions of support, the 'Widows' Pension', the Old Age Pension, and relief, were of central importance to most aged individuals in Brigus and

Newfoundland. The remainder of this thesis will be an attempt to explain the socio-historical origins and development of this.

Figure 3.1: Age pyramid, 1921, Brigus and environs.

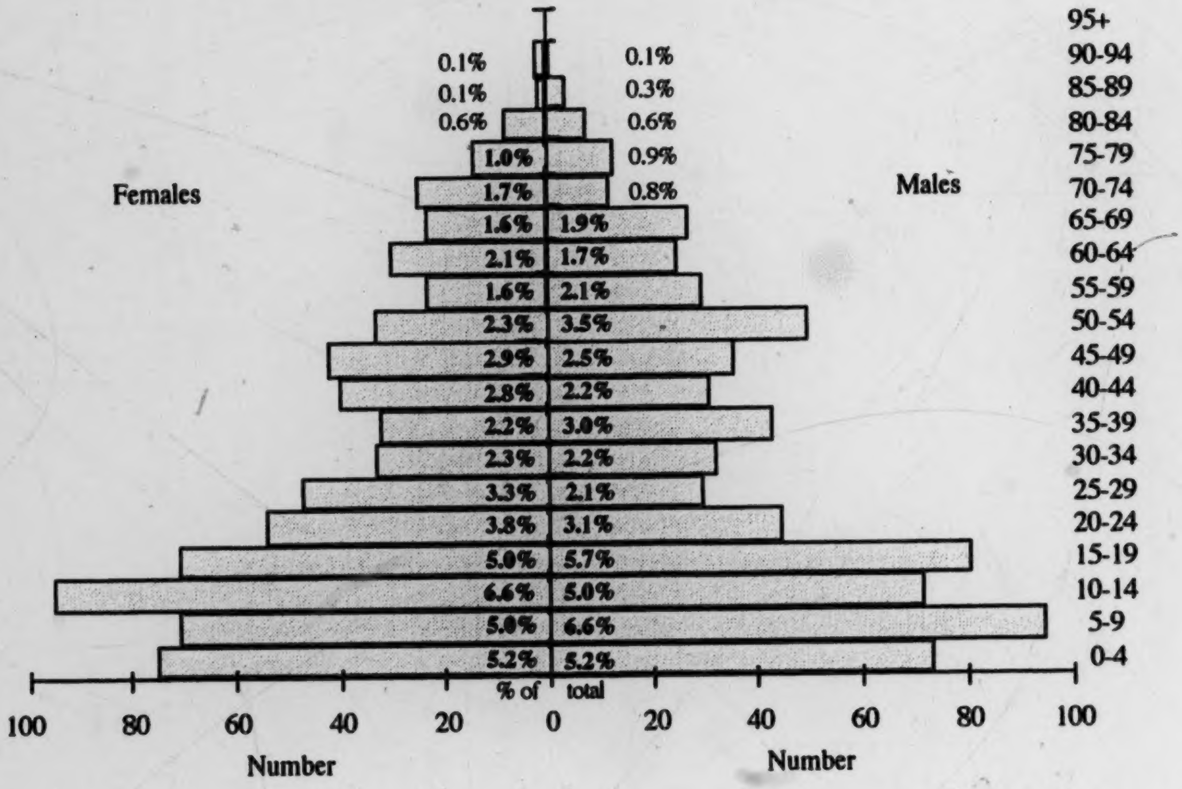
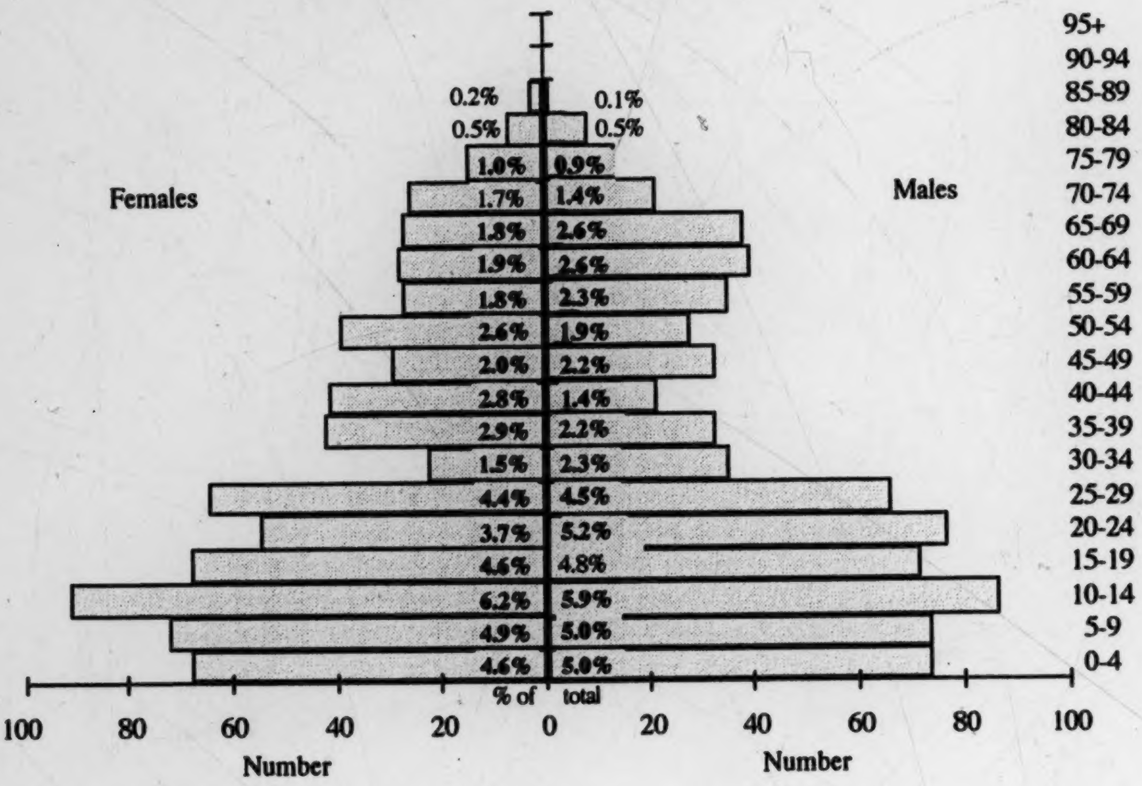


Figure 3.2: Age pyramid, 1935, Brigus and environs.



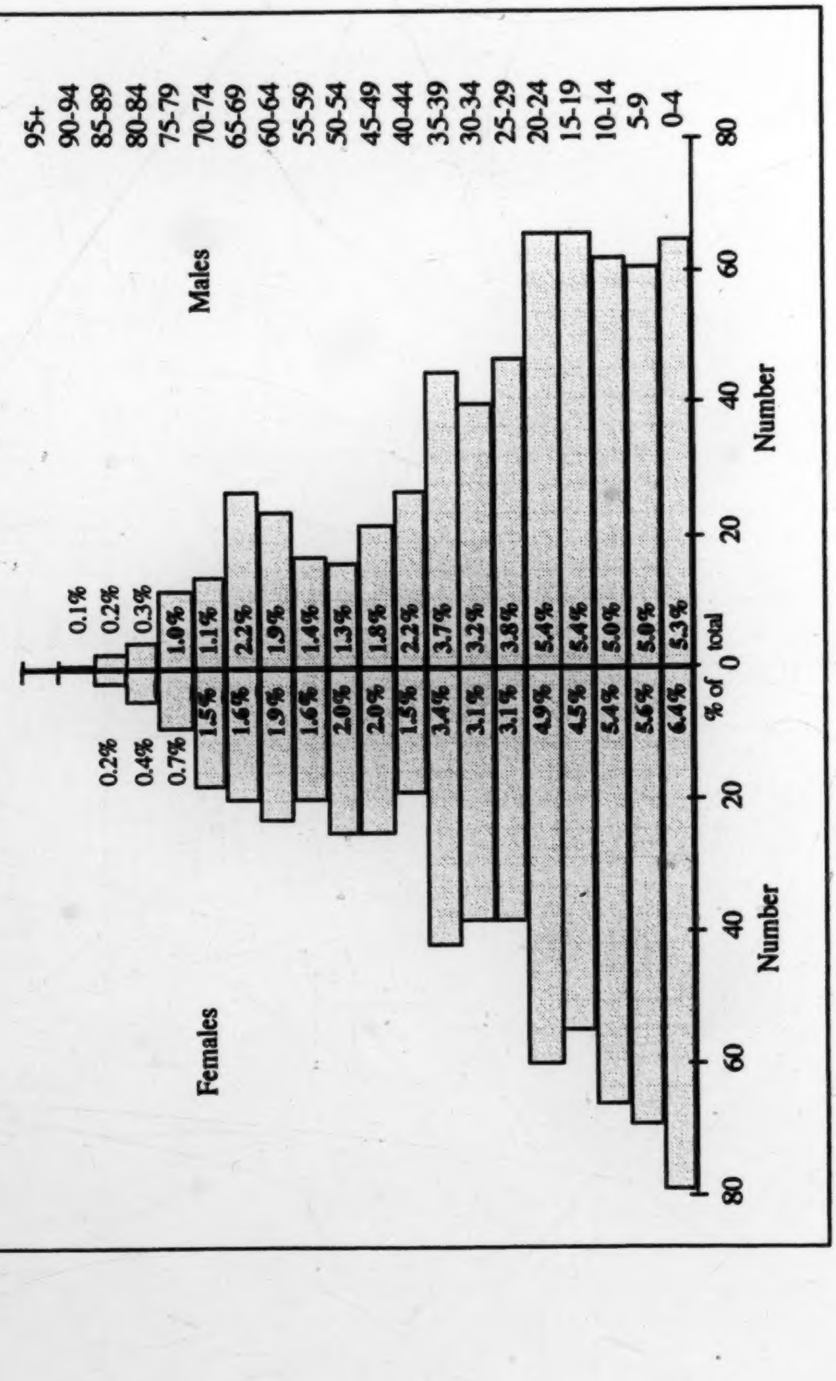
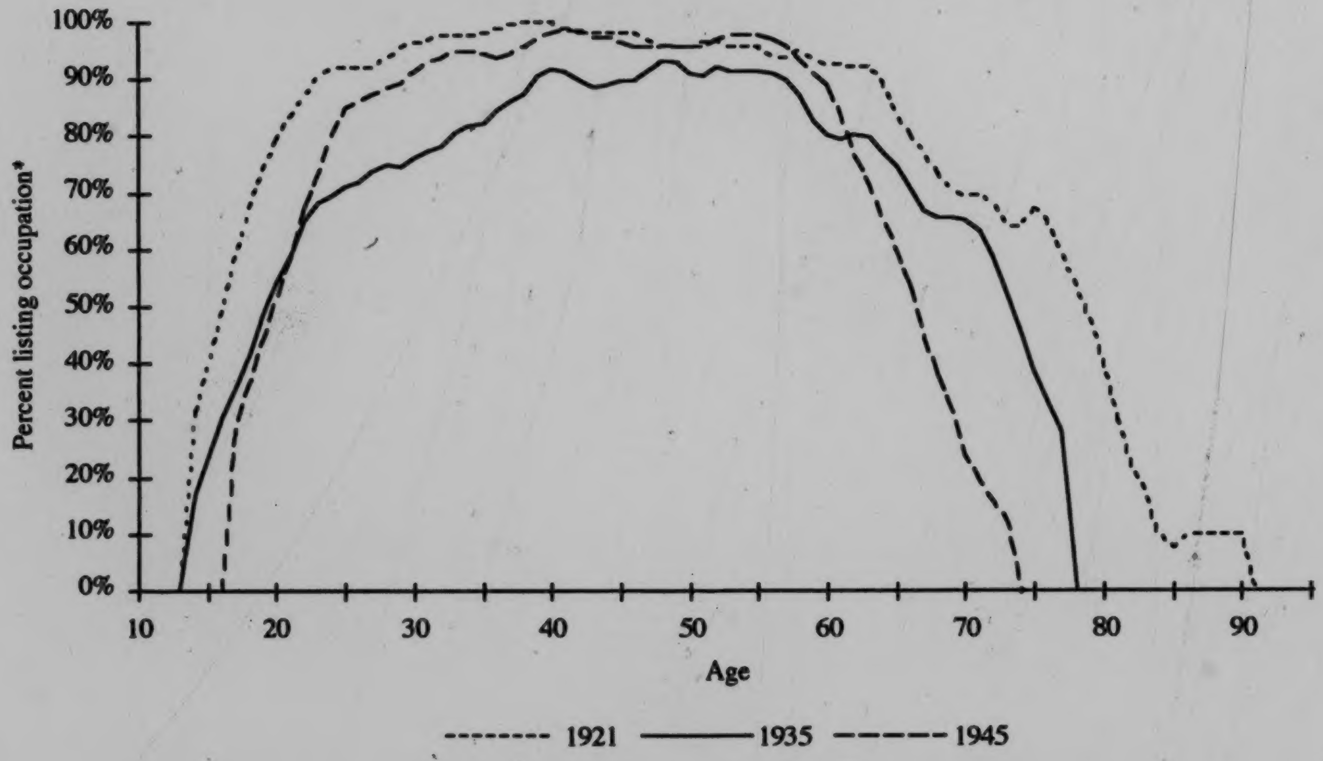


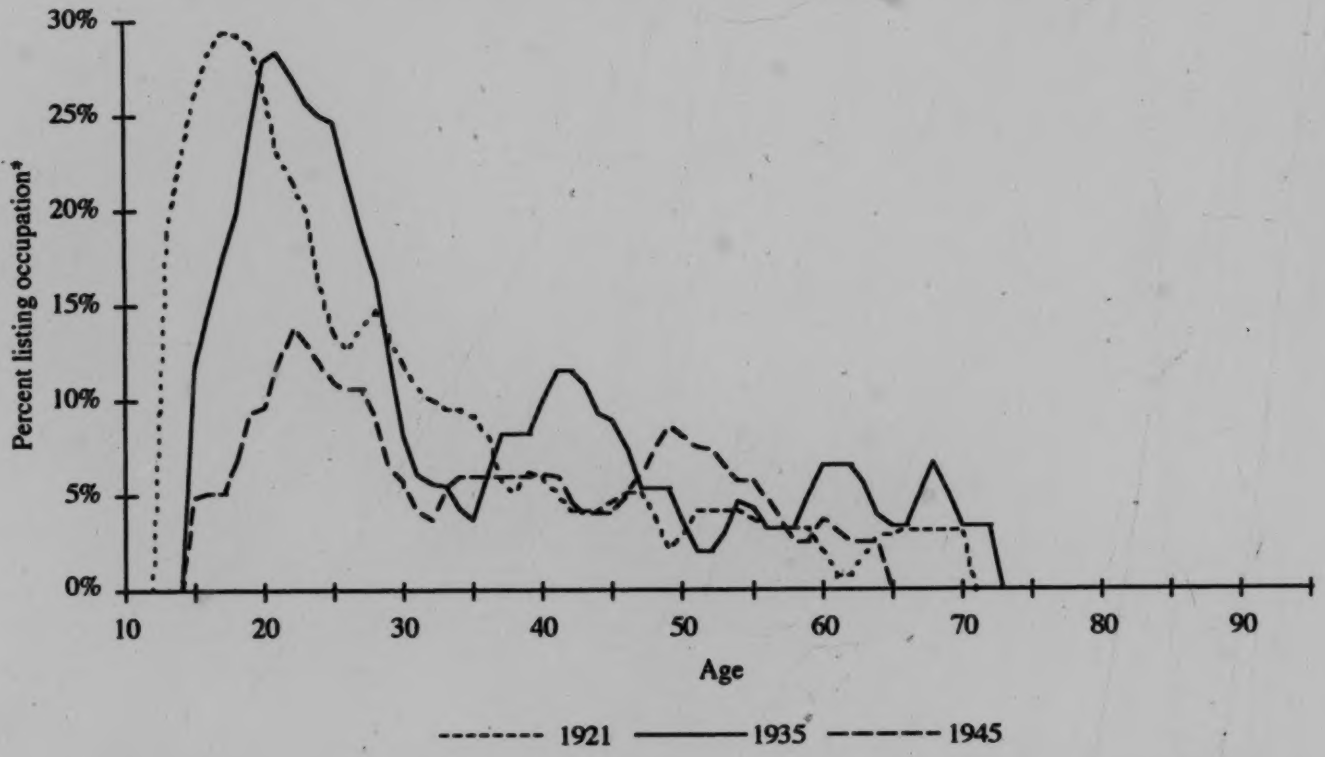
Figure 3.3: Age pyramid, 1945, Brigus and environs.

Figure 3.4: Labour force participation rates for men by age, Brigus and environs, 1921, 1935, and 1945.



*Floating ten year average, except below first and above last age in which there was anyone listing an occupation.

Figure 3.5: Labour force participation rates for women by age, Brigus and environs, 1921, 1935, and 1945.



*Floating ten year average, except below first and above last age in which there was anyone listing an occupation.

Table 3.1: Population and population increase, Brigus & environs, 1800-1945.

Year	Probable population Brigus	Increase per annum per capita	Population Brigus & environs	Increase per annum per capita
c1810	500-600*			
1836	1,318	5 to 6%	1,453	
1844†	1,582	2.50%	1,766	2.69%
1857	1,612	.15%	1,990	.98%
1869	1,876	1.36%	2,443	1.90%
1874	1,975	1.06%	2,574	1.07%
1884	2,365	1.97%	2,869	1.15%
1891	1,541	- 4.98%	2,296	- 2.85%
1901	1,162	- 2.46%	1,660	- 2.77%
1911	1,035	- 1.09%	1,607	- .32%
1921	936	- .96%	1,492	- .72%
1935	886	- .38%	1,360	- .63%
1945	888	.02%	1,326	- .25%

* Figure estimated using Colonial Office (1807), others from published Newfoundland censuses (Colonial Secretary's Office [Newfoundland], 1914; Colonial Secretary's Office [Newfoundland], 1923; Department of Public Health and Welfare [Newfoundland], 1937; Dominion Bureau of Statistics [Canada], 1949; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1845; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1858; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1870; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1876; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1886; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1893; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1903). † The 1844 census has been shown to be problematic (see Lewis, 1990, pp. 111-113).

Table 3.2: Percantage of population 65 and over and 70 and over, Brigus, 1857-1945.

	Percent of population			Percent of population	
Year	65+	70+	Year	65+	70+
1857	*	1.9%	1901	8.0%	4.8%
1869	*	2.1%	1911	9.8%	6.3%
1874	*	3.0%	1921	9.7%	5.7%
1884	*	3.2%	1935	10.9%	6.5%
1891	5.5%	3.2%	1945	9.3%	5.4%

* not given. Data comes from published census for all years.

Table 3.3: Labour force participation and age, Brigus and environs, by sex, 1921, 1935, and 1945.

		1921		1935		1945	
	Age groups	Number in labour force	Percent of age group*	Number in labour force	Percent of age group*	Number in labour force	Percent of age group*
	16 - 64	335	92	262	74	267	80
M	65 - 69	20	83	23	72	13	48
e	70 - 74	6	50	11	58	2	14
n	75+	12	50	5	28	0	0
	Total 65+	38	63	39	57	15	25
	Total	373	88	301	72	282	71
W	16 - 64	43	12	45	13	24	7
o	65 - 69	1	5	0	0	0	0
m	70 - 74	1	4	1	5	0	0
e	75+	0	0	0	0	0	0
n	Total 65+	2	3	1	2	0	0
	Total	45	11	46	11	24	6

* Excluding those in school.

Table 3.4: Age and occupation, Brigus and environs, men, 1921,1935, and 1945.

		1921			
Occupation groups		Under 65	65-74	75+	Total
Labourers	n.	58	3	2	63
	%	17	12	17	17
Fishermen	n.	160	13	6	179
	%	47	50	50	48
Mariners	n.	33	1		34
	%	10	4		9
Construction trades	n.	13	2		15
	%	4	8		4
Skilled tradesmen	n.	10			10
	%	3			3
Miners/woods trades	n.	8			8
	%	2			2
Farmers	n.	11	2		13
	%	3	8		3
Carters	n.	5	1	2	8
	%	2	4	17	2
Railway/telephone workers	n.	13			13
	%	4			3
Merchants/shopkeepers	n.	7	1	1	9
	%	2	4	8	2
Store clerks/Sales	n.	6		1	7
	%	2		8	2
Government/Teachers	n.	10	2		12
	%	3	8		3
Professionals/Clergy	n.	5	1		6
	%	2	4		2
Total	n.	339	26	12	377
	%	92	72	50	88

Percentages are column percentages by age group except for totals. which are the percentage of that age group listing an occupation ('under 65' being 15-64 as by age 15 most individuals had quite school).

Table 3.4: continued, 1935

Occupation groups		Under 65	65-74	75+	Total
Non-domestice service	n.	2			2
	%	1			1
Labourers	n.	61	4		65
	%	23	12		21
Fishermen	n.	128	10	2	140
	%	48	29	40	46
Mariners	n.	10	1		11
	%	4	3		4
Construction trades	n.	13	1	1	15
	%	5	3	20	5
Skilled tradesmen	n.	5	4		9
	%	2	12		3
Miners/woods trades	n.	3			3
	%	1			1
Farmers	n.	18	8	2	28
	%	7	24	40	9
Railway/telephone workers	n.	9	2		11
	%	3	6		4
Merchants/shopkeepers	n.	8	1		9
	%	3	3		3
Government/Teachers	n.	7	2		9
	%	3	6		3
Professionals/Clergy	n.	2	1		3
	%	1	3		1
Total	n.	266	34	5	305
	%	73	67	28	70

Table 3.4: continued, 1945

Occupation groups		Under 65	65-74	75+	Total
Non-domestice service	n.	2			2
	%	1			1
Labourers	n.	74	6		80
	%	28	40		28
Fishermen	n.	60	5		65
	%	23	33		23
Mariners	n.	11			11
	%	4			4
Construction trades	n.	28	1		29
	%	11	7		10
Skilled tradesmen	n.	9	1		10
	%	3	7		4
Miners/woods trades	n.	15			15
	%	6			5
Factory workers	n.	10			10
	%	4			4
Farmers	n.	12	2		14
	%	5	13		5
Carters, drivers	n.	7			7
	%	3			3
Railway/telephone workers	n.	14			14
	%	5			5
Merchants/shopkeepers	n.	6			6
	%	2			2
Store clerks/Sales	n.	5			5
	%	2			2
Government/Teachers	n.	10			10
	%	4			4
Professionals/Clergy	n.	4			4
	%	2			1
Total	n.	267	15		282
	%	77	37		70

Table 3.5: Age and occupation, Brigus and environs, women, 1921,1935, and 1945.

		1921			
Occupation groups		Under 65	65-74	75+	Total
Domestic service	n.	28	1		29
	%	57	50		57
Skilled trades (Dressmaker)	n.		1		1
	%		50		2
Store clerks/Sales	n.	9			9
	%	18			18
Teachers	n.	12			12
	%	25			24
Total	n.	49	2		51
	%	13	4		11
		1935			
Domestice service	n.	22			22
	%	48			47
Non-domestice service	n.	3	1		4
	%	7	100		9
Skilled trades (Dressmaker)	n.	1			1
	%	2			2
Telegraph/telephone workers	n.	2			2
	%	4			4
Store clerks/Sales	n.	6			6
	%	13			3
Teachers	n.	10			10
	%	22			21
Nurses	n.	2			2
	%	4			4
Total	n.	46	1		47
	%	15	2		13

Table 3.5: continued, 1945

Occupation groups		Under 65	65-74	75+	Total
Domestice service	n.	3			3
	%	12			12
Non-domestice service	n.	2			2
	%	8			8
Labourers*	n.	1			1
	%	4			4
Farmers	n.	1			1
	%	4			4
Telegraph/telephone workers	n.	1			1
	%	4			4
Merchants/shopkeepers	n.	2			2
	%	8			8
Store clerks/Sales	n.	4			4
	%	16			16
Teachers	n.	10			10
	%	40			40
Nurses	n.	1			1
	%	4			4
Total	n.	25			25
	%	15			13

*This may be an error in the census (the first name could be either male or female) and interviews could not confirm the existance of any women labourers or that this particular individual was such.

Table 3.6: Amount spent by Newfoundland Commission of Government on relief payments for sick, aged, and infirm, Newfoundland total, 1937-1947.

Year	Average monthly number on relief	Amount Spent	Amount spent per person per year
1937-38	9,610	$252,632	$26.29
1938-39	11,625	$332,558	$28.61
1939-40	13,589	$399,268	$29.38
1940-41	12,208	$355,906	$29.15
1941-42	8,903	$288,805	$32.44
1942-43	6,336	$264,757	$41.79*
1943-44	4,987	$244,744	$49.08
1944-45	7,694	$431,606	$56.10
1945-46	8,516	$474,837	$55.76

* Nine months. Source: Committee on Public Health and Welfare to the National Convention (1947, p. 20).

Table 3.7: Number listing occupation per household by age and sex, Brigus and environs, 1921, 1935, and 1945.

	Number listing occupation in household	1921		1935		1945	
		%	n.	%	n.	%	n.
Headed by men less than 65 years of age	0	1	3	11	19	1	1
	1	66	137	57	98	78	124
	2	23	48	21	36	11	18
	3	8	17	6	11	7	11
	4	1	2	4	6	3	4
	5	0	0	2	3	1	1
	Sub-total	79	207	74	173	73	159
Headed by men over 64 years of age	0	14	8	15	9	33	19
	1	43	24	58	36	47	27
	2	32	18	21	13	10	6
	3	11	6	5	3	10	6
	4	0	0	2	1		0
	Sub-total	21	56	26	62	27	58
Sub-total men		87	263	86	235	85	217
Headed by women less than 65 years of age	0	42	8	50	11	38	9
	1	26	5	36	8	46	11
	2	32	6	9	2	13	3
	3	0	0	5	1	0	0
	4	0	0	0	0	4	1
	Sub-total	50	19	59	22	63	24
Headed by women over 64 years of age	0	47	9	80	12	43	6
	1	37	7	13	2	57	8
	2	16	3	0	0	0	0
	3	0	0	7	1	0	0
	Sub-total	50	19	41	15	37	14
Sub-total women		13	38	14	37	15	38
Total households		100	301	100	272	100	255

Domestic servants resident in their place of employment are not included in calculating number listing occupations per household but domestic servants (including charwomen) employed outside their home are. The number listing occupation does not include residents of the convent in Brigus nor those serving in the various military forces.

Table 3.8: Percentage of individuals classified as heads of households or wives of heads by age, sex, and marital status, 1921, 1935, and 1945.

		65 - 69 Percent (total n.)	70 - 74 Percent (total n.)	75 - 79 Percent (total n.)	80+ Percent (total n.)	Total Percent (total n.)
Men 1921	Single	100 (2)	(0)	0 (1)	(0)	67 (3)
	Married	100 (19)	100 (9)	100 (6)	100 (7)	100 (41)
	Widowed	67 (3)	100 (3)	50 (4)	100 (6)	81 (16)
	Sub-total	96 (24)	100 (12)	73 (11)	100 (13)	93 (60)
Women 1921	Single	0 (1)	100 (2)	100 (1)	(0)	75 (4)
	Married	100 (13)	100 (8)	100 (4)	(0)	100 (25)
	Widowed	33 (6)	40 (15)	50 (8)	36 (11)	40 (40)
	Sub-total	75 (20)	64 (25)	69 (13)	36 (11)	64 (69)
Total	1921	86 (44)	76 (37)	71 (24)	71 (24)	78 (129)
Men 1935	Single	33 (3)	50 (2)	0 (1)	(0)	33 (6)
	Married	100 (23)	100 (16)	100 (7)	100 (5)	100 (51)
	Widowed	83 (6*)	100 (1)	67 (3)	50 (2)	75 (12)
	Sub-total	91 (32)	95 (19)	82 (11)	86 (7)	90 (69)
Women 1935	Single	(0)	33 (3)	0 (1)	0 (1)	20 (5)
	Married	100 (16)	100 (11)	100 (2)	100 (1)	100 (30)
	Widowed	56 (9)	56 (9)	50 (8)	20 (5)	47 (30)
	Sub-total	84 (25)	73 (23)	55 (11)	29 (7)	69 (65)
Total	1935	88 (57)	83 (41)	68 (22)	57 (14)	80 (134)
Men 1945	Single	(0)	(0)	100 (1)	(0)	100 (1)
	Married	100 (19)	100 (10)	100 (7)	100 (4)	100 (40)
	Widowed	100 (8)	75 (4)	75 (4)	100 (3)	89 (19)
	Sub-total	100 (27)	93 (14)	92 (12)	100 (7)	97 (60)
Women 1945	Single	(0)	100 (1)	(0)	0 (1)	50 (2)
	Married	100 (12)	100 (8)	100 (3)	100 (1)	100 (24)
	Widowed	63 (8)	44 (9)	67 (6)	20 (5)	50 (28)
	Sub-total	85 (20)	72 (18)	78 (9)	29 (7)	72 (54)
Total	1945	94 (47)	81 (32)	86 (21)	64 (14)	85 (114)

* Includes one separated individual, see text for explanation.

Table 3.9: Number of elderly individuals by headship, living arrangements, and age, 1921.

Over 64 years old living with:

Age groups		Alone or spouse only.	Unmarried children.		Ever-married children.		Unmarried children & grand-children.		Ever-married children & grand-children.		Other relatives.		Non-relatives only.		Grand-children (but no children).		Total	
		Head.	Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
65-69	n	9	10		1		4		12	2	2			4			38	6
	%	24	26		3		11		32	33	5			67			86	14
70-74	n	9	9			1	1		5	6	1		1	2	1		28	9
	%	32	32			11	4		18	67	4		4	22	4		76	24
75-79	n	5	3						4	6	1	1			4		17	7
	%	29	18						24	86	6	14			24		71	29
80+	n	4	3		3	1	3		4	4		1				1	17	7
	%	24	18		18	14	18		24	57		14				14	71	29
Sub-total	n	27	25		4	2	8		26	18	4	2	1	6	5	1	100	29
	%	27	25		4	7	8		26	62	4	7	1	21	5	3	78	22
Mean age		72	72		81	82	73		72	76	70	78	73	68	76	87	73	75
Total	n	27	25		6		8		44		6		7		6		129	
	%	21	19		5		6		34		5		5		5		100	
Mean age		72	72		81		73		74		73		69		78		73	

Percentages are row % by headship. Living with married children and grandchildren takes priority in the classification scheme and those living with them may also be living with other relations. The priorization of the rest of the groups is unmarried children and grandchildren, married children, unmarried children, grandchildren (but no childern present), other kin, non-kin or unknown, and with spouse or alone. Domestic servants and boarders do not figure in the classification. This scheme follows, and expands upon, D. S. Smith, (1986). 'Unmarried' aged individuals includes both widowed (16 men, 40 women) and single individuals (3 men, 4 women). 'Ever-married children' includes widowed children. Head includes spouse of head of household where over 64.

Table 3.9: Continued, 1935.

Over 64 years old living with:

Age groups		Alone or spouse only.	Unmarried children.		Ever-married children.		Unmarried children & grand-children.		Ever-married children & grand-children.		Other relatives.		Non-relatives only.		Grand-children (but no children).		Total	
		Head.	Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
65-69	n	11	21		3				9	3	3	3		1	3		50	7
	%	22	42		6				18	43	6	43		14	6		88	12
70-74	n	19	8			1	1		4	3	1	3			1		34	7
	%	56	24			14	3		12	43	3	43			3		83	17
75-79	n	6	4						4	4		3			1		15	7
	%	40	27						27	57		43			7		68	32
80+	n	1	4							4			2	2	1		8	6
	%	13	50							67			25	33	13		57	43
Sub-total	n	37	37		3	1	1		17	14	4	9	2	3	6		107	27
	%	35	35		3	4	1		16	52	4	33	2	11	6		80	20
Mean age		72	71		66	70	73		70	76	68	72	84	79	72		71	75
Total	n	37	37		4		1		31		13		5		6		134	
	%	28	28		3		1		23		10		4		5		100	
Mean age		72	71		67		73		73		71		81		72		72	

Table 3.9: Continued, 1945.

		Over 64 years old living with:																
		Alone or spouse only.	Unmarried children.		Ever-married children.		Unmarried children & grand-children.		Ever-married children & grand-children.		Other relatives.		Non-relatives only.		Grand-children (but no children).		Total	
Age groups		Head	Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
65-69	n	9	22		4				8	2				1	1		44	3
	%	20	50		9				18	67				33	2		94	6
70-74	n	6	9		3	1			6	4	1			1	1		26	6
	%	23	35		12	17			23	66	4			17	4		81	19
75-79	n	7	7	1	1					2			1	1	1		17	4
	%	41	42	25	6					50			6	25	6		81	19
80+	n	3	5			1			1	1		1		1		1	9	5
	%	33	56			20			11	20		20		20		20	64	36
Sub-total	n	25	43	1	8	2			15	9	1	1	1	4	3	1	96	18
	%	25	44	6	8	11			16	50	1	6	1	22	3	6	84	16
Mean age		72	71	75	73	77			70	74	74	81	79	76	72	85	71	76
Total	n	25	44		10				24		2		5		4		114	
	%	22	39		9				21		2		4		4		100	
Mean age		72	71		73				72		78		77		75		72	

Table 3.10: Relationship of widowed individuals to head of household by age and sex, Brigus and environs, 1921, 1935, and 1945.

		18-64		65-74		75+		Total		
1921		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Total
Head	n.	12	14	5	8	8	8	25	30	55
	%	80	67	83	38	80	42	81	49	60
Child	n.	1	1					1	1	2
	%	7	5					3	2	2
Parent	n.		4		9	2	9	2	22	24
	%		19		43	20	47	7	36	26
Grand-parent	n.						1		1	1
	%						5		2	1
Sibling	n.	1	1				1	1	2	3
	%	7	5				5	3	3	3
Boarder	n.	1		1	1			2	1	3
	%	7		17	5			7	2	3
Other	n.		1		3				4	4
	%		5		14				7	4
Total	n.	15	21	6	21	10	19	31	61	92
	%	48	34	19	34	32	31	100	100	100
1935										
Head	n.	17	16	6	9	3	5	26	30	56
	%	94	76	86	53	75	39	90	59	70
Child	n.	1	2					1	2	3
	%	6	10					3	4	4
Parent	n.		2		7		8		17	17
	%		10		41		62		33	21
Sibling	n.		1		1				2	2
	%		5		6				4	3
Boarder	n.			1		1		2		2
	%			14		25		7		3
Total	n.	18	21	7	17	4	13	29	51	80
	%	62	41	24	33	14	26	100	100	100

Table 3.10: continued.

1945		18-64		65-74		75+		Total		
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Total
Head	n.	6	19	11	9	6	4	23	32	55
	%	67	86	92	53	86	36	82	64	71
Child	n.	1	1					1	1	2
	%	11	5					4	2	3
Parent	n.	1		1	6	1	4	3	10	13
	%	11		8	35	14	36	11	20	17
Grand-parent	n.						1		1	1
	%						9		2	1
Sibling	n.		1						1	1
	%		5						2	1
Other	n.	1	1		2		2	1	5	6
	%	11	5		12		18	4	10	8
Total	n.	9	22	12	17	7	11	28	50	78
	%	32	44	43	34	25	22	100	100	100

Table 3.11: Households of elderly individuals by size, headship, living arrangements, and age, 1921.

Average household size of over 64 years old living with:

Age groups		Alone or spouse only.	Unmarried children.		Ever-married children.		Unmarried children & grand-children.		Ever-married children & grand-children.		Other relatives.		Non-relatives only.		Grand-children (but no children).		Total	
		Head.	Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
65-69	Size	1.9	4.4		6.0		3.8		6.4	5.0	2.0			5.3			4.3	5.2
	n.	9	10		1		4		12	2	2			4			38	6
70-74	Size	1.6	3.1			3.0	4.0		6.0	5.7	2.0		5.0	5.0	3.0		3.3	5.2
	n.	9	9			1	1		6	6	1		1	2	1		28	9
75-79	Size	2.0	3.0						8.5	6.0	4.0	8.0			3.0		4.0	6.3
	n.	5	3						4	6	1	1			4		17	7
80+	Size	1.3	2.7		3.3	3.0	3.7		7.5	6.3		2.0				6.0	3.8	5.1
	n.	4	3		3	1	3		4	4		1				1	17	7
Sub-total	Size	1.7	3.6		4.0	3.0	3.8		6.8	5.8	2.5	5.0	5.0	5.2	3.0	6.0	3.9	5.4
	n.	27	25		4	2	8		26	18	4	2	1	6	4	1	100	29
Total	Size	1.7	3.6		3.7		3.8		6.4		3.3		5.2		3.5		4.2	
	n.	27	25		6		8		44		6		7		6		129	

See Table 4.6 for explanation of living arrangements. Note that the numbers are the number of individuals, not the number of households (some households have more than one elderly individual in them and a few households fall into more than one type of living arrangement, e.g., an elderly couple, living with their children and an elderly sibling would be counted twice under 'unmarried children', for the married couple and once under 'other relatives' for the sibling). While domestic servants do not figure in the classification of living arrangements, they do in the calculation of household size.

Table 3.11: Continued, 1935.

		Average household size of over 64 years old living with:																
		Alone or spouse only.	Unmarried children.		Ever-married children.		Unmarried children & grand-children.		Ever-married children & grand-children.		Other relatives.		Non-relatives only.		Grand-children (but no children).		Total	
Age groups		Head.	Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?		Head?	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
65-69	Size	1.8	3.3		4.7				7.9	5.0	2.7	3.3		5.0	3.0		3.8	4.2
	n.	11	21		3				9	3	3	3		1	3		50	7
70-74	Size	1.8	3.4			3.0	6.0		6.0	5.7	3.0	2.3			3.0		2.9	3.9
	n.	19	8			1	1		4	3	1	3			1		34	7
75-79	Size	1.7	2.8						6.0	7.3		8.0			3.0		3.2	7.6
	n.	6	4						4	4		3			1		15	7
80+	Size	2.0	3.0							8.8			6.0	5.5	3.0		3.6	7.7
	n.	1	4							4			2	2	1		8	6
Sub-total	Size	1.8	3.2		4.7	3.0	6.0		7.0	6.9	2.8	4.6	6.0	5.3	3.0		3.4	5.8
	n.	37	37		3	1	1		17	14	4	9	2	3	6		107	27
Total	Size	1.8	3.2		4.3		6.0		6.9		4.0		5.6		3.0		3.9	
	n.	37	37		4		1		31		13		5		6		134	

Table 3.11: Continued, 1945.

Average household size of over 64 years old living with:

Age groups		Alone or spouse only. Head.	Unmarried children. Head? Yes	Unmarried children. Head? No	Ever-married children. Head? Yes	Ever-married children. Head? No	Unmarried children & grand-children. Head? Yes	Unmarried children & grand-children. Head? No	Ever-married children & grand-children. Head? Yes	Ever-married children & grand-children. Head? No	Other relatives. Head? Yes	Other relatives. Head? No	Non-relatives only. Head? Yes	Non-relatives only. Head? No	Grand-children (but no children). Head? Yes	Grand-children (but no children). Head? No	Total Head? Yes	Total Head? No
65-69	Size	1.9	4.2		3.5				6.8	8.0				3.0	3.0		4.1	6.3
	n.	9	22		4				8	2				1	1		44	3
70-74	Size	2.0	3.2		3.3	4.0			5.3	7.3	2.0			8.0	3.0		3.4	6.8
	n.	6	9		3	1			6	4	1			1	1		26	6
75-79	Size	1.7	3.3	3.0	4.0					5.5			2.0	2.0	3.0		2.6	4.0
	n.	7	7	1	1					2			1	1	1		17	4
80+	Size	2.0	2.6		6.0	3.0				10.0		2.0		16.0		5.0	2.8	7.2
	n.	3	5		1	1				1		1		1		1	9	5
Sub-total	Size	1.9	3.7	3.0	3.8	3.5			6.1	7.3	2.0	2.0	2.0	7.3	3.0	5.0	3.5	6.2
	n.	25	43	1	9	2			14	9	1	1	1	4	3	1	96	18
Total	Size	1.9	3.7		3.7				6.6		2.0		6.2		3.5		114	
	n.	25	44		11				23		2		5		4		3.9	

Table 3.12: Percentage of population ever married, Brigus and environs, 1921, 1935, 1945.

	Census year					
	1921		1935		1945	
Ages	Percent	(N)	Percent	(N)	Percent	(N)
<15	0	(456)	0	(399)	0	(402)
15-19	1	(140)	2	(120)	3	(121)
20-24	37	(96)	12	(114)	29	(126)
25-29	69	(72)	54	(108)	51	(85)
30-34	79	(61)	69	(49)	76	(78)
35-39	90	(69)	86	(63)	75	(87)
40+	93	(457)	92	(406)	93	(332)
All 15+	69	(895)	62	(860)	62	(829)

CHAPTER 4

THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

How, where, and with whom the elderly lived in Brigus in the period from 1920 through 1945 were as much the product of history as were the organization of the fishery and the development of the Newfoundland state. While gerontological modernization theory purports to be a theory of the history of aging, it is in fact a fundamentally ahistorical, evolutionary theory and any criticism of it will inevitably be an historically based one. The history of the aged is more than just the end product of demographic shifts and changes in the family; though those are important (McDaniel, 1993). Instead the particular histories of the aged need to be examined in and of themselves. Much of the historiography of Newfoundland has been dominated either explicitly or implicitly by the problem of Newfoundland's purported failure to modernize. The assumption underlying this chapter is that the history of the aged in Newfoundland is more than just a peripheral subject, identified exclusively with gerontology and social service, but needs to be understood as a central topic in the history of Newfoundland society. This chapter will make two main arguments: 1) that many of the central problems in Newfoundland history in fact are, or have as a important component, problems of the social support of the needy, of which the aged were an important part and 2) that the situation of the aged is only understandable as an aspect of, not simply a product of, the political and economic history of a society. An examination of the history of the aged in Newfoundland leads to a fundamental reanalysis of some of the central tenants of the dominant Newfoundland historical narrative. The following is an historical theory on the aged in Brigus and, to varying degrees, in Newfoundland as a whole.[1]

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[1] 'Newfoundland as a whole', does not include Labrador here as it has a rather different history.

I. Historical Issues

A. The problem of settlement

The historiography of pre-nineteenth century Newfoundland has been dominated by the *problem* of Newfoundland's failure to develop along the same course from discovery to nationhood as Britain's other North American colonies. For the period from its rediscovery by Europeans in the late fifteenth century until the establishment of local government in the first part of the nineteenth century the problem has been framed in terms of Newfoundland's slowness in establishing *permanent* settlement and *settled* society. It has traditionally been argued that this *retarded* pattern of development was due to British colonial policy driven in turn, and to varying degrees, by West Country mercantile interests which controlled the migratory fishery at Newfoundland. The dominant historical and political paradigm has categorized Newfoundland's development as a process of "retarded colonization" or "retarded development" with Newfoundland's failure to follow the standard North American pattern of development from *discovery* to colony to nationhood being ascribed to a conspiracy by foreign interests (see, Harvey, 1897; McLintock, 1941; Prowse, 1895; Sider, 1986, and for a critique of this position see English, 1990; Matthews, 1968). This construction of Newfoundland's history was first made by John Reeves in 1793, "in a book which has been studied and eagerly accepted by almost every historian who came after him" (Matthews, 1978, p. 21). Reeves' version of Newfoundland history early on became a central theme in Newfoundland and in turn reinformed the historical debate. However, as Keith Matthews (1968; 1973) convincingly and repeatedly pointed out, the evidence for anything like a systematic and consistent plot by the West Country merchants to stop year-round settlement is extremely difficult to find.

B. The problem of modernization

The historiography of nineteenth and twentieth century Newfoundland has been dominated by the *problem* of Newfoundland's failure to *modernize* and its lack of development, in particular its failure to develop into a *modern* industrial society similar those found in Canada or the United States. A long tradition of laying the problems of Newfoundland at the door of backward looking merchants, as opposed to forward looking capitalists (e.g., Smallwood, 1931) was given theoretical treatment in the 1970s by S. Antler (1975), E. Antler (1981), Faris (1982), and Sider (1986). According to this theory the *modernization* of Newfoundland was distorted and held back by merchants set on maintaining their monopoly of economic and political power. Newfoundland's inability to become a modern industrial society was not simply indicative of a lack of development but rather the creation of merchant capital. Merchant capitalism created *traditional* Newfoundland and the family fishery for its own benefit.

II. The Maritime Origins And Character Of Newfoundland Society

> *Newfoundland ... should always be considered as a great English ship moored near the Banks, during the fishing season, for the convenience of English fishermen.*
>
> (Lord North, quoted in Harvey, 1897, p. 68)

That the cod fishery was the original reason for European interest in Newfoundland is generally recognized; what is not always recognized is the essentially maritime nature of the origin of Newfoundland society and how this was a major factor in its social development. The famous comparison of Newfoundland to a great ship highlights the fact that, while Newfoundland's physical construction might be of rock, its social construction was that of the sea and shipboard life, in particular of the Anglo-American maritime society of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. The period from 1600 to 1815 marked the foundation and development of Newfoundland as a fishing-based society while showing the limits of such a society within an expanding North Atlantic economy.

A. 'Settled Society'

The problem of settlement and of *settled society* has been of central concern in the early history of Newfoundland. Two separate, though linked, aspects of a society being a permanent or *settled society* employed here are *year-round* residence and *life-long* residence. Within the history of Newfoundland before the nineteenth century the *year-round* versus *life-long* residence distinction parallels the marxist distinction between (social) production and (social) reproduction. In seventeenth through nineteenth century Newfoundland it was life-long-residence (social reproduction), rather than year-round residence (social production, which had became common in the seventeenth century) which serves to define Newfoundland as a settled or other than settled society.

It has often been assumed that year-round residence, operationalized as the numbers of winter *inhabitants*, represented permanent, settled society (e.g., Head, 1976; Innis, 1954).[2] However, the fact that the Royal Navy reported separate summer and winter populations of 'inhabitants', and their relative numbers, suggests that they were less permanent than the label'inhabitant' might suggest. Handcock (1989, p. 95) partially corrects this by pointing out that it is illusory to treat the "permanent population" as simply the total wintering population of inhabitants. However, his conclusion that the number of women and children—being in some sense inherently less transient than men—defines the truly permanent population still overestimates that number. Obviously the presence of both men and women is necessary for virtually all settled societies, however, to argue that the presence of women is sufficient in itself to make a society a permanent and settled one would seem to be mistaken. While women might spend much of their 'productive' and

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[2] The population figures for Newfoundland for the years 1675-1826 come from the "Answers to heads of enquiry relating to ye fishery and trade of Newfoundland" or the "Account of the fishery". The population figures for the *inhabitants* were always divided between the summer and winter populations of inhabitants, with the former almost always being greater than the latter (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

'reproductive lives' at Newfoundland, the fact that so many of them retired to England, which Handcock (1989) gives example of, still implies a great deal of impermanence. Ryan (1982; 1994), following suggestive remarks by Matthews (1973), makes it clear that though some inhabitants, in particular *Masters* and *Mistresses* (as recorded in the Colonial Office records), might spend a number of winters at Newfoundland they were, until at least the last quarter of the eighteenth century, far from permanent residents. In the terminology being used here, while they might be year-round residents, even long time ones, they were not life-long residents. "The Sick and the Lame; even the Blind and Aged" (Thomas, 1968, p. 172), stages in most individuals lives rather than social groups, were not, it will be argued, an integrated aspect of pre-nineteenth century Newfoundland society. This had important implications for the character of pre-nineteenth century Newfoundland society and is central in the history of the aged in Newfoundland.

B. The Migratory Fishery: 'Unsettled Society'

While English exploration of Newfoundland started in the late fifteenth century, the English fishing efforts there were quite limited up to the last decades of the sixteenth century when the English cod fishery at Newfoundland started to expand rapidly. This expansion was clearly linked to a 'commercial revolution' (Davis, 1967) which saw major developments in English international trade and colonial expansion. In this period merchant capitalists organized themselves, their markets, and the emergent working class into an increasingly transatlantic and international trade network (see Rediker, 1987, pp. 77-78).[3] This 'commercial revolution' was founded on the dispossession of small property holders and the creation of the "seething mobility" of vagabonds and workers (Wallerstein, 1976, p. 165) who were to fill the positions of workers in a North Atlantic maritime economy (see, Rediker, 1987, pp. 16-17). Within the maritime world itself this 'revolution' involved the destruction of pre-existing non-capitalistic relations of production which had governed medieval shipping and which had guaranteed a comparatively high degree of security for seamen by setting forth explicit rules for job security and payment of wages, minimum quantities of provisions and pay, limits on punishment, and an early form of welfare. "The whole history of the seamen from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century is one long story of social depression and loss of privilege." (Lloyd, 1968, p. 22). Increasing numbers of maritime workers came to be placed in a new relationship to property, which had been transformed into capital, i.e., they had become free and waged labourers. "Seamen were, by their experiences in the maritime labour market and labour process, among the first collective labourers," (Rediker, 1987, p. 78) and their exploitation, in the technical sense of the term, was entirely as proletarian workers.

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[3] In so far as the 'commercial revolution' was essentially a *revolution* of the transportation industry (i.e., shipping) by (*merchant*) capitalists, the distinction commonly made between merchant and *industrial* capitalism becomes problematic. However, this question is clearly well beyond the scope of this thesis.

The Newfoundland fishery and carrying trade were important aspects of this international network. Its international character is highlighted in the life history of Richard Renur who, after a number of years at Newfoundland, was looking to the Poor Law for support perhaps in his 'old age' (however, his age cannot be determined from this document):

7 February 1828

> He was born at a place called Marlborough Head [Marblehead, Massachusetts?] in North America. When he was about the age of eleven years he entered the American merchant service as a common seaman, and continued in that service until he was about twenty-one years of age, when he was taken from the American ship and pressed on board the *Crescent*, frigate, where he remained seven years, when he was drafted on board another frigate, where he remained four and a half years, when he was discharged.
>
> He then came to Totnes, where he remained two months, when he entered into the Newfoundland service in the employ of Mssrs. Blacker and Cranford. He was in their employ nine months, when he returned to England and got into the employ of Mr. Henry Holdsworth of Dartmouth as a seaman [probably in the coastal trade]. He continued in that employ four years, when he went into Mr. Henry Pinsent's employ, and went to Labrador. He was in that employ four years, when he went into the employ

> of Mr. Thomas Pinsent, and remained five months [probably also at Labrador or at Newfoundland]. He then returned to Totnes where he has resided ever since. About the year 1816 he married Sarah, his present wife, in the parish church of Totnes, by whom he has no children.
>
> Richard Renur
> Totnes, Devon
> (Quoted in Taylor, 1989, pp. 83-84)

Before 1610 the English fishery at Newfoundland has generally been described as a strictly migratory fishery. What this has meant is that fishermen[4] came out to Newfoundland each spring to fish and process cod and returned to Europe each fall. These fishermen were clearly neither year-round nor life-long residents. Newfoundland served simply as a fishing station while the supply and export stages of production, the recruitment of fishing crews, and the production-reproduction of labour was carried on from England and Ireland. The English salt fish trade was carried out by interests collectively known as the Western Adventurers, who were based primarily in the West Country ports of England in the counties of Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, and Hampshire.

The fishing industry in turn supported agriculture and manufacturing—much in the form of cottage industry—in the counties of its origin. This manufacturing and agriculture also supported the fishery because fishermen returning in the fall from Newfoundland found winter employment in them while other members of their families would have worked in them year-round. As Aaron Thomas (1968), writing towards the close of the eighteenth century, described it:

> The Countys of Devonshire and Dorsetshire supply the greatest number of hands for the Newfoundland Fisherys yearly than all the rest put together. Poole and Newton Bushell are the Emporiums for the Two Countys. Lads from the Plow, Men from the Threshing Floor and persons of all sizes, Trades and ages and from the Manufactorys flock annually, in the Spring, to Newfoundland. The desire of seeing a foreign Land and the hope of returning with Six or Ten Pounds in their pockets is the consideration which

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[4] The non-gender neutral term is used advisedly; virtually all of the *fishermen* coming from Britain at this time were men.

> induceth many to leave their Native Country for a few months and visit this Land of Fish. (p. 171). (see also, Starkey, 1992, pp. 169-70)

The fishermen going to Newfoundland were life-long residents of England, though as fishermen and mariners they were year-round residents of nowhere in particular.

In the Newfoundland fishery, fish[5] was caught from small boats but the fish was processed and the crews lived on shore during the fishing voyage. The *fishing ships* were the method of getting crews to and from Newfoundland and dried fish to markets in southern Europe. The Spanish fishery and, to a lesser extent, the French fishery were carried on from ships, with the ship serving as the place where fish was caught from, as well, the site of processing of the fish and where the fishermen lived. It was the English method of producing fish which situates Lord North's famous description.

While the sea and the fishing grounds were clearly common property, without access to suitable shore site, or a 'room', that common property could not be used. By monopolizing shore space the fishery as a whole could be effectively monopolized. As a result of this, the *ancient* custom among the *Western Adventurers* was that shore sites and the structures built upon them—at least if left unoccupied—were viewed as common property just as the ocean was. The first person arriving at a harbour each year had the right to use which ever shore facility (room) they wished to and also became the *Admiral* of the harbour, i.e., the civil authority of that harbour (see, Matthews, 1975, p. 73). One of the effects of this was that the ship, rather than the land and the land based structures, was the effective form of productive, private capital. In this system the land and land based structures were an extension of the ship and the social relations governing the shore were extensions of those governing the ship and the maritime world.

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[5] Meaning cod, in Newfoundland to this day fish is synonymous with cod and salt fish with salt cod.

As on mainland North America in the seventeenth century, a number of colonization attempts were made in Newfoundland. These 'colonies' were initiated by a series of private entrepreneurs with the at least overt purpose of establishing permanent settlements and settled society based on resources beyond the fishery. The first and most famous was John Guy's colony at Cupids in 1610, which was probably adjacent to Brigus. The Western Adventurers opposed those colonization schemes because they believed—with good reason—that by design or default these profit driven enterprises would come to control the fishing industry either by monopolizing shore space and wood supplies or by taxing the migratory fishery. The Western Adventurers' infamous opposition to settlement through the seventeenth century is best understood as opposition to such entrepreneurial colonization rather than to year-round residency. However, none of these colonization efforts proved successful and the vast majority of Europeans at Newfoundland continued the fishery solely on a migratory basis.

C. Early Settlement in Newfoundland

The early settlement, or exploitation, of Newfoundland was in marked contrast to the more *successful*[6] colonization efforts in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. In these latter colonies the settlement-exploitation pattern clearly involved an explicit recognition by the participants that in moving to the New World they were changing both their year-round and their life-long residence.

In those mainland colonies there was an explicit attempt to re-establish the sort of society which their settlers had known in England but which were gradually dissolving there. In England the economic system had been undergoing change from the older regulations of a corporate and hierarchical society towards a system giving greater freedom to emerging capitalists. The values of the free and international market place had been intruding upon older mores in England since at least the sixteenth century and even earlier in sectors such as shipping. Meanwhile, in the established mainland American colonies, especially New England, the substitution of free market relations for hierarchical and corporate ones generally lagged behind England (see Nash, 1979, pp. 78-79).

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[6] If success is measured by the number of colonists. If, however, success is measured by economic profits then England's fishing *colonies* were far more successful. The same was true for France's North American colonies and is highlighted by the fact that in the Treaty of Paris of 1763 the French chose the tiny islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon and the right to fish on the west coast of Newfoundland (though not to settle there) over their extensive mainland colonies.

In contrast, the early settlement or exploitation of Newfoundland was established within the context of something like a North Atlantic maritime society and on the basis of the free and international market place and of free, proletarianized labour. In so far as development is simply conceived of as growth in permanent population (see Figure 4.1) then Newfoundland was less developed than New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. However, if development is conceived of as the movement from unfree markets and labour exploited via extra-economic means (i.e., within Western Europe, classic feudal relations of production) to *free* markets and labour via strictly economic methods (i.e., capitalism), then Newfoundland was more developed than Britain's mainland North American colonies and probably more developed than England itself.[7]

D. Production and Reproduction in the Newfoundland Fishery

The effective form of productive capital within this system was the ship which, like a floating factory, contained essentially only two classes, a master, who was or who, more often, represented capital, the owners of the ship, and the servants, the seamen, free waged labourers. One of the defining characteristics of capitalism is the separation of production from reproduction (see Coontz, 1988, pp. 148-151; Ursel, 1992, pp. 34-39) and the ship, as floating factory, was equally defined by this separation. The ship was overwhelmingly a male and relatively young world, a world dominated by production, and a world within which most aspects of human reproduction took place at least one step removed. This essentially capitalistic world of maritime production existed within, or, better, between, worlds still strongly marked by non-capitalistic relations of production and it was within these worlds that human reproduction necessary for the continuance of shipboard society took place. Such shipboard society clearly could not reproduce itself, in a biological sense, on board ship. Women and children were not a part of shipboard life, neither were the aged or the infirm. Count Magalotti's observation of the West Country port city of Plymouth from 1699 was that "only women and boys are to be seen; the greater part of the men living at sea" (quoted in Fisher, 1992, p. 234). A seaman started and ended his life outside of shipboard society, most often in societies still marked by the corporate values and organization derived from pre-capitalist social organizations (or "familial patriarchy" within feminist theory, see Ursel, 1992, pp. 27-34). Aged and infirm seamen received long-term support and lived out their lives in land based communities. In so far as they were unable to engage in wage-based employment, for example around the docks, they lived imbedded in social relations which predated the capitalist ones within which they had previously worked, in particular within the older corporate traditions embodied in the poor laws[8] and public charity. The ship then, while it might serve seamen as their year-round residence, their life-long (if their life were long) residence was in some shore-based community.

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[7] This, of course, slightly distorts the situation. Up until the nineteenth Newfoundland is best understood as an advanced part of British society rather than as an integrated advanced society in itself. This is discussed further below.

In Britain's mainland North American colonies the shift from corporate society towards a more individualistic market oriented economic system, which had marked much of the English-speaking world since at least the sixteenth century, probably lagged behind

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[8] The Poor Laws as national legislation had arisen in response to the same dispossession of small property holders and the creation of the "seething mobility" of vagabonds and workers which had created a maritime working class.

England (see Nash, 1979, pp. 78-79). In much of the rest of North America the relatively easy availability of agricultural land served to retard the growth of a landless working class and of wage labour. In response to this the need for labour was often met through other forms of exploitation, in particular slavery and indentured servitude (see Nash, 1979, pp. 13-17, 106-111; Smith, 1947). However, in Newfoundland the lack of land with significant agricultural potential could not serve that function. From the start, European exploitation of the island's resources was based on essentially capitalist relations of production and it was those relations which structured the fishery.[9] Slavery and indentured servitude seem to have been almost entirely absent in Newfoundland; except in the few abortive officially sanctioned colonization efforts in the seventeenth century, such as Guy's colony at Cupids. In their stead labour was obtained from free waged labourers. Labourers for whom Newfoundland was very much like a 'great English ship.'

The opponents of the establishment of settled society in Newfoundland were remarkably clear in their understanding of the link between settled society and social reproduction and the contradiction between this and Newfoundland's position as a site of capitalist production. Capt. Francis Wheler, of H.M.S. *Tiger*, writing in 1684 commented that "soe longe as there comes no women they [the *residents*] are not fixed" (quoted in Handcock, 1989, p. 21). Implicit in the opposition to colonization was the belief that no place was suitable for settled society and permanent occupance if its foundations were not based on agriculture and, conversely, that settled communities could not be based solely on a staple trade, especially not on one as prone to uncertainties both of markets and of nature as the dried cod fishery (Handcock, 1989).

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[9] Most modern studies agree that the early migratory fishery and the early resident fishery were dominated by capitalist relations of production (marked by the payment of a working class in wages). The disagreement at present is whether or not those initial relations of production were latter supplanted by relations of production which were not, or not strictly, capitalist (see Antler, 1975; Antler, 1981; Alexander, 1976; Faris, 1972; Lewis, 1990; Neis, 1980; Sider, 1986).

Up until the nineteenth century Newfoundland society to a remarkable degree reproduced, as an extension of, shipboard society. A number of features of that society give evidence of this. Like shipboard society, early Newfoundland society was overwhelmingly young and male. Even after 1750, the labour force at Newfoundland as a whole was dominated by males between the ages of sixteen to thirty years (Handcock, 1989). Around Conception Bay[10] males outnumbered females by a considerable number and continued to do so up through the first part of the nineteenth century. In Conception Bay, the median annual ratio of adult men to adult women from 1675 through 1722, among the summer population, was 8.1 to one. From the first year when more than just the total over-wintering population was recorded, 1723 through 1776, the median annual ratio of adult men to adult women was 5.2 to one during the winter—when many of the migratory, male servants had returned to Britain—and 5.8 to one among the summer population. In comparison, while early seventeenth century (1624-25) colonial Virginia had the high ratio of men to women (4.9 to one) characteristic of a new colony, the well established mid-eighteenth century (1755) Maryland colony had a ratio of 1.1 to one (figures from Davis, 1973, p. 127); a ratio not achieved around Conception Bay until the mid-nineteenth century. By the period 1786 through 1815, when Newfoundland has generally been considered to have taken on a more settled character, the median annual ratio of adult men to adult woman around Conception Bay was almost two to one (1.9) for the over-wintering population and almost three to one (2.9) for the summer population (calculated from figures found in Lewis, 1988, pp. 215-217), and Conception Bay was in this period far and away the most settled region of the island. Other regions of the island would have shown an even greater sexual imbalance.

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[10] And probably Brigus as well, though the community level demographic statistics do not exist for this period.

1. Lack of 'elderly' in early Newfoundland society

While an absence of women is evidence that Newfoundland was not a truly settled society, the presence of women (and children) is not necessarily evidence of settled society. Perhaps a better indication of the lack of a settled society, and of the social institutions which were an essential aspect of it, in seventeenth and eighteenth century Newfoundland, is found in the number of persons who might be considered *elderly*. That this number was extremely low is perhaps the most telling evidence that most of the *residents* of Newfoundland at the time saw it as a place where one worked and not a society in which people envisaged spending their whole lives. In Newfoundland in 1675, out of a total year round population of 401 *residents* and 973 *servants* (most of whom were probably strictly migratory) there was only one clearly identifiable elderly person, a Rich. Winsor living at Bay Roberts (close to Brigus) and noted as being 80 years of age (the ages of others were not recorded). He seems to have been in some sense 'retired' in that he is not listed as owning or operating a fishing property (i.e., he is not listed as owning either a boat or a stage) and as having only one servant (not enough to be engaged in a serious fishing operation). There are others in this census who may have been elderly by modern standards but there is little evidence of any who were not actively engaged in the fishery, i.e., being, in the modern sense, *retired*. The only clearly three generational household was composed of a *Planter*, his wife, their children, and the planter's, seemingly widowed, mother, living at Bay-de-Verde.

This lack of aged individuals closely parallels the similar absences of the aged in ship board life and among sailors. Rediker's (1987) sample of common seamen showed that only two percent were over fifty year of age and none were over 56. Edward Barlow declared sadly in the 1740s that "there are fewer old seamen in want far than landsmen, for they seldom live until they be old, for they either die with want or with grief to see themselves so little regarded" when "old and in need" (quoted in Rediker, 1987, p. 157).

Handcock's (1989) figures for immigrants to Newfoundland for the period 1750 to 1830 show equally low numbers of aged persons. This lack of the elderly is probably the strongest evidence that Newfoundland was not, except perhaps for a very few, the place of life-long residence for those fishing and living there.

The fundamental feature producing this pattern was that the relations of production dominating Newfoundland society were capitalist and maritime. The class structure of seventeenth and eighteenth century Newfoundland closely resembled and was a part of Anglo-American maritime society. Numerically it was dominated by a proletarian class of *free* labourers, i.e., fishing servants who worked either for set wages, on a piece work basis, or on a modified piece work basis.[11] From 1675 through 1776 servants, both male and female, outnumbered masters[12] by a median annual ratio of close to six to one (5.6 for both summer and winter populations) and servants (overwhelmingly in the fishery) made up over 76% (both average and median values) of the summer adult population and 72% (median value, average value equalled 73%) of the winter adult population. In comparison, in New England, even by the end eighteenth century, free labourers made up only 12% of the total population and probably less than 20% of the "working" population (Coontz, 1988).

2. The importance of maritime law as social legislation

As Newfoundland law developed it continued to reflect the maritime origins and nature of the society. One of the first admiralty courts in North America was proposed for

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[11] Modified in that with some fishing techniques, e.g., nets, the individual workers' pay was determined by the output of the work unit (the fishing crew) rather than on the basis of an individual's production. Payment on a piece work, modified or not, was known as 'going on shares', it was, however, a share of the production of the season, not of its profits.

[12] The ratio here is of master's only, while some unmarried mistresses operated independently and hired servants, the evidence suggest that they only made up a small minority of the total number of 'masters' and would not significantly effect the ratio of servants to masters.

Newfoundland in 1615, "where disorders among fishermen were very common." (quoted in Rediker, 1987, p. 314). That Newfoundland law was essentially maritime law, carried out on land, was later explicitly recognized by Newfoundland's common law courts (Supreme Court of Newfoundland, 1901, p. 108, the original decision was from 1818). The legal relations which governed early Newfoundland society and which shaped much of Newfoundland's later development were those of maritime tradition and of the admiralty courts. Some of the important legal questions around which maritime and later Newfoundland law revolved included: 1) how seamen were to ensure their wages were paid; 2) how suppliers were to obtain some security for their investments in a very uncertain and international arena; 3) how mariners and merchants were to obtain labour from seamen; 4) how mariners and merchants from different nations were to receive justice in foreign ports; 5) how to ensure that the basic resources were open for all to use—for traders and merchants the right to sail freely on the open sea and for fishermen 'adventurers' the right to fish unimpeded at Newfoundland; and 6) the general regulation of economic relationships between the owners of ships or their representatives, the captain, and shipboard workers, seamen.

What maritime law did not deal with were those social and economic relations existing outside of the voyage and the ship, in particular the social relations which constituted settled society. With a few exceptions, the elderly, children, and women were not part of a ship's crew. Most of what is now generally covered under social welfare, was an aspect of the home communities, the life-long communities, of mariners, not of their workplace. The ship or, better, the voyage—for the mariner's workplace included off-ship areas while on the voyage—was the workplace, but shipboard labourers were produced and reproduced in home ports and surrounding areas. Seventeenth and eighteenth century Newfoundland lacked what most English or Irish people would have considered some of the basic social relations which constituted *settled society*.

One of the central concerns of maritime law and legislation, which was an aspect of social welfare legislation, was the problem of how to ensure that seamen were able to return to their home ports and would not be abandoned by their masters in foreign ports. For those fishing at Newfoundland the fishing season was the *voyage* as it continued to be referred to through the twentieth century. The voyage began in Britain and was not completed until the return to Britain. In some cases the term of the voyage was for one season's voyage, in others, especially when working for planters, it might be for two or more seasons. In either case a central aspect of the working arrangement was that servants would be insured return passage to England or Ireland at the end of the work contract. Aaron Thomas (1968) also highlighted the multifaceted nature of such regulation:

> I have before stated that every Master who brings a Servant or Fisherman from England has a right to retain Forty Shillings of his wages to enable him to return to England. This Law was made for the purpose of preventing emigration to America, to enforce the return of Fishermen to Europe to their Wives and Familys, and lastly, and particularly, to prevent Fishermen from wintering in Newfoundland. (pp. 170-171) (see also Reeves, 1793a, p. 136)

This *public welfare* legislation clearly highlights the fact that seventeenth and eighteenth century Newfoundland did not constitute a *settled society*.

Again this stands in contrast to England's other North American colonies, with the exception of those areas controlled by the Hudson Bay Company. There indentured servants and redemptioners entered into their labour contract in order to get *one-way* passage to North America. The contract of servants going to the fishery at Newfoundland had always by tradition and by law to guarantee their return passage before the end of that contract. Even the planters, who were themselves nominally resident in Newfoundland, hired servants, often through their merchant suppliers, on the basis that those servants would be guaranteed return passage to Britain with the end of their labour contract. The Trinity Court Records show that even in the latter half of the eighteenth century whenever possible the local magistrates forced resident planters to settle accounts with their servants

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and to ensure their return passage to Britain. For example, in 1767 at Trinity John Evans, a planter, was directed to pay his servants' wages and passage money home, as was John Snelgrove (cited in Matthews, 1968, pp. 412-413). In 1776 masters were required to post bonds for the return passage of all servants they had brought out, and at times abandoned servants were returned to Britain at *public*, i.e., the Royal Navy, expense (Matthews, 1968, p. 413). The British government and the Western Adventurers as a whole—though often not as individuals—had an interest in seeing that servants brought to Newfoundland would not be abandoned there.

3. Changes in the fishery

By the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century the traditional ship fishery, with the ships coming out from England annually in the spring involved primarily in fishing rather than trade, had virtually died out. While still referred to by the British Admiralty as "Fishing Ships," The West Country Adventurers' vessels had come to be used primarily for supplying the resident fishery, transporting passengers to and from Newfoundland, and for exporting dried cod to southern Europe (Davies, 1980; Innis, 1954; Matthews, 1968). The fishery had come to be based on planters and resident planter-merchants, i.e., they were involved both in mercantile and productive activity, who resided in Newfoundland year-round and who depended on the annual importation of equipment, provisions, and labour for their survival. At the same time a strictly migratory fishery continued, with *bye-boat keepers* coming to Newfoundland as passengers on the ships of others to fish on an annual basis and returning to England or Ireland in the fall. The eighteenth century was marked by both a shift towards a resident fishery and an increased cohesion between the *migratory fishery*—dependent on the planters for much of its supply of fish—and *sedentary* fishery—with the labourers remaining primarily migratory except during periods of warfare (see, Matthews, 1968, p. 276).

While the planters' or residents' fishery was based on year-round occupation at Newfoundland, this was still far from constituting permanent, settled society. As Matthews (1973, No. 3, pp. 3-5) succinctly described it, those resident Newfoundland planters who had made money retired to England while those who went bankrupt emigrated to the Atlantic seaboard colonies; clear evidence that Newfoundland was a place of year-round but not life-long habitation. All through this period adult men outnumbered adult women by almost seven to one around Conception Bay. Men outnumbered adult women by a median value of 6.8 to one around Conception Bay for the period from 1725 through 1749 during the summers and 5.5 during the winters. Even more tellingly men servants outnumbered women servants by a median value of 35.0 to one around Conception Bay for the same period during the summers and 25.3 during the winters. In turn the class structure of Newfoundland society was such that *servants*, i.e., the working class, greatly outnumbered all other classes combined. Male and female servants made up a median value of 76 percent of the adult population during the summers and 72 percent during the winter for the same period. That class structure combined with the sexual imbalance among the working class of Newfoundland clearly indicates that the working class and the society itself was not reproducing itself in Newfoundland—as would be required in any autonomous settled society—but instead remained a migratory element of a larger capitalist trans-Atlantic society for whom Newfoundland was a migratory workplace.

E. Growth of a 'Winter' Population

Between the years 1725 and 1775, differing in exact timing by region, the number of winter residents in Newfoundland increased significantly. St. John's and the district of Conception Bay were the centres of much of this growth (Head, 1976). Head (1972) has argued that a set of necessary (but, I would argue, not sufficient) conditions for permanent settlement came to be satisfied in the eighteenth century which allowed and encouraged this. The first of these conditions which, in turn, finally tipped the balance in favour of the *resident fishery* was the increased availability of cheaper and more reliable supplies and provisions from mainland North America. This along with the introduction of the potato, the only staple carbohydrate which could be grown in Newfoundland[13]—making supplementary agriculture a possibility—made the life of the residents of Newfoundland relatively more secure, as compared to returning to England or Ireland, than it previously had been. The second condition was famine and economic recession in Ireland—a prime source of labourers since the seventeenth century—which made it increasingly easier for the Newfoundland planters to attract labourers to the island and in turn probably made the return to Ireland less attractive to labourers recruited from there. Finally, much of the growth also occurred due to recurrent warfare with France, and hence between fishing servants and the Royal Navy press gangs. Between 1740 and 1815 (in half the 75 years of that period England was at war with France) periods of warfare had always seen both an increase in residency and the number of over-wintering servants (Head, 1976).

1. Changes in emigration from England

Changes which took place in the eighteenth century in the traditional source areas of English emigrants to Newfoundland have not been closely enough examined in terms of their effect on Newfoundland settlement. There were changes both in southern England as a whole and in the West Country in particular which probably had important effects on settlement at Newfoundland. The second half of the eighteenth century saw two important changes in the economic environment of southern England as a whole: 1) the growth of more intensive grain farming due to a long term increase in wheat prices, and hence food prices, which had begun in the early 1760s and had intensified during the Napoleonic Wars; and 2) a decline in cottage industries beginning by at least 1750 and connected to the rise in factory production in the north of England (Boyer, 1990). These changes probably had important implications for people, especially servants, considering over-wintering at Newfoundland. Previously, many servants in the fishery returning to England had as many as four sources of income: a small plot of land for growing food; employment as a day labourer in agriculture; employment—probably year-round for his wife and children—in cottage industry, and poor relief (Laslett, 1965).

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[13] The climate and soil of Newfoundland are unsuitable for grain production and even the growing of root crops entails large amounts of labour relative to production in the fishery with such food stuffs being imported from more favourable agricultural regions of North America (see Crabb 1975, 50-51, 68).

Both of these changes had important effects on all parts of the population but especially so for women. Beginning around 1750 the switch to more intensive grain farming and the restriction of agricultural labourers' allotments due to enclosure resulted in a decline in employment possibilities for women and children in agriculture, (Snell, 1981). These changes also resulted in a pattern of annual labour demand which did not fit the seasonal round of the migratory fishery servants as well as less intensive forms of agricultural production had. While the industrial revolution was notorious for its employment of women and children in factories, for those women and children in areas where cottage industry was in decline there were significant declines in employment opportunities (Boyer, 1990). The decline in cottage industry would also have had a negative effect on those servants coming home from the Newfoundland fishery and looking for winter employment there.

The particular situation existing in the West Country, especially in the county of Devon, seems to have followed the more general trend. The Devonshire woolen industry began to decline perceptibly by the middle of the eighteenth century, while the mining industry—which had operated much like a cottage industry—had also virtually ended by the mid-point of the eighteenth century (Fisher, 1992; Hoskins, 1972). It is not clear whether there was enough of a shift in the nature and intensity of agricultural production in the West Country to negatively effect the winter employment situation of migratory Newfoundland servants.

What these changes probably meant was that men servants would have been more inclined to remain over the winter and less inclined to return to England. The high costs of provisions had always served as a strong disincentive to servants staying the winter in Newfoundland. As one eighteenth century observer put it, "no winter servant can earn as much for his master as the expense of his provision," (quoted in Innis, 1954, p. 313). The rising costs of food in England along with cheaper food coming from mainland North America probably changed that rough equation. The decline in work for women and children probably also meant that women were more likely to see Newfoundland as a source of employment, either for the summer or year round. Women servants seem to have been less migratory than men servants (Lewis, 1988, pp. 198-199). This was perhaps indicative of longer term work contracts among women servants combined with the more limited work opportunities for women at Newfoundland compared to those of men (e.g., as seamen with American or other vessels trading at Newfoundland).

The crude and minimalist measure of the number of migratory servants is the difference between the number of servants recorded as being in Newfoundland in the summer and the number recorded as so in the previous winter.[14] This count of *extra* summer servants only represents the total number of migratory servants if all of the migratory servants were working at Newfoundland for the summer and returning each fall to Britain, which was essentially the case when these figures started to be recorded in the seventeenth century. If significant numbers of servants were serving under longer contracts then this number represents only a portion of the migratory servant population, though the extent of this and how it changed over time is unknown. While the absolute and relative difference between the numbers of summer and winter servants clearly cannot be used to determine the number or proportion of servants who were strictly migratory, changes in them, especially in the proportion of summer only servants, probably does give some clue about the degree of *settledness* of servants. While the percent of the total summer population accounted for by the extra number of men and women servants in Newfoundland in the summer—the minimum number of migratory servants—varied markedly from year to year between 1723 and 1764,[15] the median value for men servants was 22% while that for women servants was 0% and the average values for the same period were 24% and 7% respectively. While figures from the latter part of the eighteenth century are more scattered, the greater proportion of migratory men servants as compared to female servants seemed to have been maintained.

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[14] Clearly the extra summer servants were not necessarily migratory servants from Great Britain, however, it is practically impossible that they could have been anything else. If there were any seasonal migration internal to Newfoundland it would have involved migration from the Conception Bay region, the most heavily populated area, to less populated regions. There has never been any evidence of seasonal migration of servants to Newfoundland from the North American mainland.

As Ryan (1994) has pointed out, while an over-wintering or year-round population was necessary to define a truly settled or life-long population, it was not sufficient to do so. Even though the number of winter residents in Newfoundland may have increased, what was labelled the *inhabitant fishery* by the Royal Navy remained essentially a migratory fishery up until the nineteenth century. It was migratory in two senses: 1) the fishery was dependent on a class of migratory workers who were migratory the same way as the other members of their class who worked in the strictly migratory fishery; and 2) the vast majority of planters and their families continued to think of their parish in Britain as home, their life-long residence, the place they would seek security in case of disability, old age, or other troubles even though they might spend a number of winters in a row in Newfoundland (discussed further below). The inhabitant fishery would remain migratory as long as there was no winter work for fishing servants in Newfoundland or as long as Newfoundland lacked the social institutions, such as the Poor Laws, which supported individuals in times of need.

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[15] Much of this variation was probably due to the method and quality of how the numbers were ascertained by the Royal Navy.

2. Increase in year-round population

The increase in the relative importance, numbers, and security of the resident population was accompanied by an increasing shift of mercantile activity from England to Newfoundland. Resident merchants were not entirely a new phenomenon, especially not around Conception Bay and St. John's, though they are still probably better described as year-round merchants as they continued to be based in England. While resident merchants existed in Newfoundland from at least the 1670s, the major shift in mercantile activity to Newfoundland really started in the middle decades of the eighteenth century. This move was undertaken primarily because it had become the most profitable way of doing business. Chief Justice John Reeves, who resided in Newfoundland in the 1780s, described the situation (Reeves, 1793b.):

> As to this Mode of carrying on the Trade [i.e., by supplying residents], whatever the West Countrymen may say against those who practice it, they certainly introduced it themselves. It is well known at Newfoundland, that the most profitable Way of carrying on the Fishery is by supplying Boat keepers, and taking Payment for the Supplies the Fish and Oil they catch.... Residency and Population have increased, because it is generally held the cheapest and most profitable Way of carrying on the Fishery by Residents; when this was known, it was easily seen that any Man who could land at Newfoundland with a Cargo of Supplies, was as fitted for carrying on the Fishery as a regular bred Fisherman.... (pp. 86-87)

The shift to a more resident fishery was easily made because in practice the difference between the migratory and the resident fisheries had always essentially only been one of economic strategy. Individuals involved in the fishing strategies shifted easily and often between resident and migratory ones. Depending on the circumstances—wars, the price of fish, the availability and cost of labour—a migratory boat keeper might start to be supplied in Newfoundland (e.g., in a period of warfare this might involve less risk) or a resident might return to Britain for supplies (see Matthews, 1968, pp. 168-171) or when they were no longer able to engage in the fishery, due to age, disability, etc. During the same period many of the formerly migratory merchants became resident merchants while others become planters or dropped out of the fish business altogether (Matthews, 1968).

Despite their increasing dependence on the resident fishery, the Western Adventurers continued to "pretend so much Zeal against" settlement (Reeves, 1793b, p. 88). By this period opposition to settlement is best understood as opposition to the establishment of government and settled society in the sense of that understood in England at the time, i.e., as a place of life-long residence. Their opposition was not to year-round settlement nor even to private property in fishing rooms, which the West Country merchants, generally held and needed to hold in order to continue business. The English government and the merchant adventurers from the West Country ports did not consider, did not want, and did not believe that Newfoundland could be what they saw as a settled society. The merchants believed that Newfoundland's potential lay overwhelmingly in the fishery and they believed, correctly, (see Crabb, 1975), that Newfoundland's climate and soils were unsuitable for anything like a society based on agricultural.

3. Prerequisites for a settled society

The foundations of settled society, for eighteenth century English and Irish men and women was landed, agricultural property and the social institutions which went with and constituted that sort of society. Aaron Thomas, writing in the 1790s, makes the point clearly and makes the link between the lack of agriculture and the absence of social welfare institutions:

> I must say that in Newfoundland a Work House does not exist and Poor Rates are as great strangers as fertile fields and Cinnamon Groves. The Motto which is riveted on the minds of all Housekeepers here is that He who will not work shall not eat.... In Newfoundland a lazy man is

> consider'd by Inhabitants[16] in the same light as Bees do a Drone, where everyone assists in expelling him from the Hive. In this Land there is no Public Charity for the Sick and the Lame; even the Blind and Aged can have no assistance but what comes from the hands of Private Individuals. The Fisherman which Chance has left behind must be supported all Winter at the expense of the Master whom he serv'd during the Summer. It was his province to see that the Fisherman was sent Home at the close of the Fishing Season. (Thomas, 1968, p. 171)

The merchant adventurers from the West Country did not consider Newfoundland to be a settled society because it lacked the social institutions of a settled society. In particular it lacked landed, agricultural property,[17] "fertile fields," and those institutions, such as the Poor Laws, which the merchant adventurers believed supported and even encouraged the "Drone", along with the "Sick and the Lame...the Blind and Aged". Neither did they want Newfoundland to become such a settled society because the costs of the institutions of what they understood as a settled society, that is of eighteenth century English society with its established social institutions and in particular the Poor Laws, would have had to be supported by the fishing trade. It was settled society and not settlement in the sense of year-round habitation or *residency* which the merchants objected to.

In fact the merchants or at least an important portion of the merchants wanted settlement but without settled society. Chief Justice Reeves, probably the most cited eighteenth century observer, and the island's first non-naval judge, makes this clear:

> With respect to the Population of the Island, and the Increase of Residents, this seems to me an Evil, if it is one, that cannot be so easily cured. I repeat, that the Merchants which pretend so much Zeal against Residents have been and still are the principal Encouragers of Residency; the Resident Boatkeepers are the Hens that lay them their Golden Eggs; so long as they

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[16] By *Inhabitant* Thomas clearly meant *planter*, i.e., those who hired labour and who were the class equivalents of those who would have payed the poor rates in England (farmers, craftsmen, etc.), and not their servants and who were then still to a great degree migratory (the "Fisherman which Chance has left behind").

[17] Despite the claims of Liberal politicians and historians (e.g., Prowse 1895; Harvey 1897; Sider 1986) it is clear that the West Country merchants' judgement of the agricultural potential of Newfoundland, and in particular the Avalon Peninsula was substantially correct (Crabb 1976) rather than some plot to retard the development of agriculture in order to retain a monopoly.

> are successful, and are able to pay their Way, no Merchant (with all his supposed Zeal for a Fishery carried on from Great Britain) ever wishes to remove them; but as soon as they run not only repeatedly in Debt (for the most thriving are so, and the Merchant takes pretty good Care to keep them so) but so much behind, Year after year, as not to afford a Prospect of the Merchant being any longer a Gainer by them, then no Body is so anxious as he is to send them out of the Country to prevent their being burthensome to himself; and some of these are the Instances the Merchants cite, when they say they have brought many Home without taking any Thing for their Passage. The other Instances are of Servants who are grown lazy and unprofitable.... (Reeves, 1793b, p. 88)

Clearly it was not year-round residents as such which the merchants were objecting to. As Reeves points out, the merchants were their "principal Encouragers". Residents who, in the balance books of the merchants, could support themselves had become not only acceptable but necessary for the fishery. Rather it was only residents who could not support themselves, those who would "not to afford a Prospect of the Merchant being any longer a Gainer by them" and "Servants who are grown lazy and unprofitable," i.e., those persons who in England would have looked to the community—embodied in the Poor Laws—for their support, who the Merchants objected to. Reeves gives further illustration of the logic of this:

> While I was at Trinity Harbour last Summer, I saw a Boatkeeper of Perlican, who, with a Wife and Ten Children, wished to be carried to England to his Parish. The merchant, by whom he had been supplied till the last Two years, told me, he had fallen so in Debt to him that he could not supply him further, and he had offered to convey him and his Family to England, as he saw no Probability of the Boatkeeper retrieving his Affairs. The Boatkeeper, however, wished to try his Luck again, and persuaded a Merchant at Harbour Grace[18] to supply him; he went on for Two Seasons, had no Success, fell deeply in Debt to his new Merchant, and was, when I saw him, in Dread of being refused Supplies for the Winter, and his Family perishing for Want. To escape this he wished to go to England; but the first Merchant now refused what he had before offered; the Man was out of his Hands; he was not bound by that Sort of Honour, which is well understood in the Island, to supply him during the Winter; a Burthen which always falls on the Merchant who has the Fish during the Summer, and not being so

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[18] Perlican (now Old Perlican) was about equally distant, by water, from Trinity Harbour (now simply Trinity) and Harbour Grace, while the latter community is much closer by land almost all medium to long distance communications was by water until the advent of the railway in Newfoundland in the early twentieth century.

> bound, he had no need to renew his Offer of conveying the Man and his Family to England. I thought the first Merchant perfectly right; he had done his Duty, while he had any Obligation on him. I mention this only to shew, that something else than Zeal for the Trade is the Motive for sending Home Persons without being paid for so doing. (Reeves, 1793b, pp. 86-87)

In turn the "Obligation" here is evidently a business obligation in the sense that it was a personal economic obligation, one which could be terminated by the parties involved, and not a generalized social one, i.e., one in which the larger community was seen as having an interest. When the business relationship had been broken by the boatkeeper going to another merchant to be supplied, any obligation or "Burthen" existing between the original merchant at Trinity Harbour and the boatkeeper and his family—the obligation to return them to their home parish—was also broken.

It is also clear from this passage that both the merchant and the boatkeeper and his family still considered their parish in England their proper home—their life-long residence—despite fairly long, year-round residence in Newfoundland. When the boatkeeper and his family were "in Dread of ... perishing for Want" they looked towards the community embodied in their parish in England as the proper locality of social support. The fact that the "Boatkeeper of Perlican" and his family "wished to be carried ... to his Parish" is telling as it was the civil parish in England which supplied poor relief and in looking to his home parish the boatkeeper and his family clearly were looking towards receiving relief under the provisions of the Poor Law. They clearly did not expect to find support from the community at [Old] Perlican, Harbour Grace, or Trinity Harbour. *Settled society*, in its full English sense, existed in England and the social obligation of the merchant adventurer to the needy was to return them to that society. The merchant adventurer did not want to reproduce the institutions of such a *settled society* at Newfoundland; institutions which had developed in a different mode of production than that existing and necessary for an essentially capitalist fishery.

It is also clear that the local authorities in England, in particular those determining poor relief, considered those working, residing, and even those born in Newfoundland to have their proper *home* in England. Handcock (1989) cites examples of settlement examinations from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries where individuals and families born and raised in Newfoundland returned to England where it was determined exactly what their proper home parish was—usually the homes of parents or grandparents—in order for them to collect poor relief; the sort of support they clearly could not receive at Newfoundland. In the case of Richard Renur of Totnes, Devon, cited above (Taylor, 1989), Renur's settlement was determined by his taking employment at Totnes, even though he clearly passed almost all of his life, while *in* England, at Newfoundland or Labrador. Newfoundland's position as a 'great ship' was implicitly recognized in the settlement laws which determined access to poor relief. Not being a settled society, long residence in Newfoundland, even being born and spending most of ones life there, did not change the place of a persons settlement in England.

When the merchant adventurers from the West Country ports looked towards New England, and in particular Boston—the most important American trader to Newfoundland—they saw a society which was truly settled, which the vast majority of the population viewed as their life-long residence, and in which the costs associated with truly settled society were fully realized. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts it was the community at large which was understood as being responsible for the care of the poor. In the New England colonies the *impotent* or *deserving* poor—widows, orphans, unwed mothers, and those incapable of supporting themselves due to old age, sickness, or lunacy—were considered to be entitled to public assistance, provided by and restricted to the towns where they were considered to legally reside. Those who were poor because they could not find work—the able-bodied poor who in England would be put to public employment under the English Poor Laws—were not a part of the New England legislative system or world view.

The lack of employment which was the cause of much of the poverty of seventeenth-century England, was virtually never a problem in seventeenth-century New England. Instead the new colonies experienced chronic and long term labour shortages throughout this period. As a result in New England, in contrast with England, private charity was never more than a minor supplement to local rates, voted and paid for by the local community at large, i.e., the town to which the needy belonged. Pauperism in New England was conceived of as a public evil to be remedied at public expense. (Foster, 1971)

By the second half of the eighteenth century New England was fully a settled society, with all of the social institutions which went with that including the poor and a public system of relief to support them. By 1772 chronic labour shortages had been replaced by a chronic lack of employment for many and overseers of the poor in Boston were providing out-relief to as much as 15 percent of the households in some wards and relief for others in the workhouse and almshouse. By the time of the American Revolution poor relief was becoming a major expense for and a concern of the community (Nash, 1979).

Clearly settled society, in its full English sense, existed in England and, in a modified form, in New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and other North American colonies. In the early period of the fishery in Newfoundland the merchant adventurer's objection to settled society had been an objection to the establishment of the top of the social structure of settled society, i.e., the establishment of a class of property owners who would control the fishery through their control of shore space or through taxation. In the latter period of the fishery the focus of merchant opposition to settlement was to the creation of the very bottom of the social structure of settled society, i.e., a class of people dependent on the community for their support.

F. The Socio-Economic History of Newfoundland and of Brigus to 1815

1. Unsettled settlement, 1600-1776

Brigus was one of the earliest sites of year-round English settlement in Newfoundland. It had a small year-round population by at least the 1670s. Brigus remained a fairly average small community in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with an economy based on the limited inshore fishery in its immediate vicinity.

The inshore fishery in the lower areas of Conception Bay, where Brigus is located, has always been fairly limited. If the economic base of Brigus had been primarily the local inshore fishery the community would doubtless have remained relatively small. As a result of this, up until the end of the eighteenth century Brigus seems to have remained a relatively unimportant community in Conception Bay compared to the larger commercial centres such as Harbour Grace and Carbonear or communities situated close to more extensive fishing grounds such as Bay-de-Verde and Port-de-Grave. While there was clearly a year-round population, it was neither permanent nor settled in a sense recognized as such by those in their home communities in England and Ireland.

Evidence of this impermanence can be found in those censuses where the names of the *inhabitants* are given. In the census of 1681 (Colonial Office, 1681, pp. 79-80) there are four family names listed for the community, corresponding to the four planters residing there. However, none of these family names show up in the next census in which names are given in 1708 (Colonial Office, 1708, pp. 253-260). Nor are these family names to be found in Brigus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In turn the family names found in the 1708 census (Colonial Office, 1708) are not found among the listing of properties and property holders taken in 1807 (Colonial Office, 1807), neither are they names which are found in Brigus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While, as Handcock (1989) has suggested, there may be matrilineal links which are nominally invisible between the early censuses and the nineteenth century, this begs the question of why only those links would exist within a social system which was clearly patrilineal, patrilocal, and patriarchal.

By the 1750s Brigus, along with the rest of Conception Bay, was dominated by the inhabitant fishery. By the end of the eighteenth century the region represented the most settled society in European Newfoundland. However, it was a settled society in a sense significantly different from that of the home country. The members of this society were generally referred to as inhabitants, residents, or *housekeepers* rather than *colonists* (at least since the first part of the seventeenth century) or *settlers*. Reeves' description of the boatkeeper and his family wanting to be returned to England, cited above, is immediately followed by him pointing out that the character of society around Conception Bay and St. John's was different from other areas of Newfoundland.

> But this Motive, such as it is, operates only in certain Parts of the Island; in Trinity Bay, for example, it may operate, both with regard to Boatkeepers and Servants who become burthensome, and for this Reason; the Merchants there are few; every One knows his own Dependents; their own Boatkeepers and Servants must, at any Rate, be maintained by the respective Merchants, and knowing that, the Merchants are solicitous to remove the Evil as soon as it appears, and are ready enough to prevent it. Thus in small Society private Interest becomes a public Virtue. But it is very different in Conception Bay, and at St. John's, where the Population is larger, and there is less Dependence and Connection between Merchants, Boatkeepers, and Servants. In these Places Merchants may more easily shift off from themselves the Burthen of decayed Boatkeepers and unprofitable Servants upon the Public, to be supported as they can. (Reeves, 1793b, pp. 86-87)

While 'The Public' here may represent the beginnings of settled society, to a great extent the costs of this support, and hence settled society, continued to come from Great Britain, albeit, *via* the Royal Navy which organized sporadic relief and provided unemployed and destitute servants with a means to get to the North American mainland colonies or back to Britain a number of times in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The economic base which both allowed for the growth in population around Conception Bay beyond that which could have been supported by the local inshore fishery and which depended on that growth for its exploitation was first, c. 1750, the cod fishery on the offshore banks and later the migratory summer cod fishery on the area known as the French Shore[19] and, later, on the coast of Labrador (Head, 1976).

The inhabitant population started to increase more rapidly from about 1750 and continued until the start of the American Revolution in 1776. However, the population seems to have levelled off after that date and remained at the same level until the first decade of the next century (see Figure 4.1). The difficulties experienced in securing labourers from Britain would seem to have set severe limits on the possibility of population growth. Despite the rise in importance of the inhabitant fishery, the character of Newfoundland society, even in the most settled areas like Conception Bay, continued to be marked by its maritime and migratory origins. While the proportion of the population which were *permanent* was growing, a large proportion of the population was probably not settled in the sense that eighteenth century English (or Irish) men or women would have understood it. In 1793 Chief Justice of the first Supreme Court of Newfoundland, John Reeves, could say:

> Notwithstanding the increase of inhabitants, Newfoundland is still nothing but a great ship, dependent upon the mother country for every thing they eat, drink and wear or for the funds to procure them; the number of inhabitants seems to me rather to increase this dependence inasmuch as their necessities are thereby increased. They all look to the sea alone for support; nine-tenths of the people procure from the soil nothing but potatoes; and those who carry cultivation furthest reap no produce but what can be furnished by a garden. In some places hay is cut, but corn is never thought of; neither the soil or the climate having encouraged the few attempts that have been made to grow it. (Reeves, 1793b, pp. 171-172)

Perhaps the clearest direct evidence that Newfoundland continued its shipboard character is to be found in the ratio of men to women, especially of the working class, at Newfoundland. While a small population of semi-permanent small capitalists, *planters*—recorded as 'masters' and 'mistresses'—were resident, servants continued to come from the British Isles and returned there or moved on to New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. The relative ratio of masters to mistresses during the summers had a median value of 1.4 to one in the years 1675 through 1722, when only the summer population was enumerated, and 1.2 and 1.1 for the years 1723-1776 for the summer and winter populations respectively. After that date the ratio stabilized at one to one (median 1.02, average 1.08). Meanwhile the ratio of men servants to women servants showed a much more extreme sexual imbalance, during the years 1675 through 1722 in over three-quarters of the summers for which the figures are available there were no women servants present at all, while for the years 1723-1776 the relative ratio of men servants to women servants had a median value of 25.5 to one during the summer and 13.6 to one for the winter (Figure 4.2). These figures highlight the fact that only one class—merchants and planters—was in any sense settled. For the working class—men servants and women servants—settled society, the society within which they were born, their children were raised, and to which they would return when disabled or old, remained in England or Ireland.

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[19] This comprised much of the northern and western coasts of the island of Newfoundland. It was an area of French migratory fishery and not of French settlement.

The reason for this was that the basis of settlement and settled society was fundamentally different in Newfoundland than it has been in England. Whereas in England settled society had been founded on landed property, i.e., productive agricultural land, Newfoundland's settled society, even in the most settled regions like Conception Bay, was founded on the fishery and the sea which had from the beginning been exploited within the context of essentially capitalist relations of production.

While the migratory summer cod fishery, first on the French Shore and later at Labrador, allowed Brigus, Conception Bay as a whole, and areas to the northwards to expand beyond population levels which could have survived on the local inshore fishery, it probably did not result in a fundamental change in the character of settlement. The migratory summer cod fishery probably did create a slightly greater demand for year-round labour in the construction of the larger vessels used in that fishery but it seems clear that much of the labouring population continued to come to Conception Bay and Newfoundland as a whole on a migratory basis, with Newfoundland continuing to be a site of year-round but not life-long residence. While censuses for the population of the individual communities do not exist for the eighteenth and first third of the nineteenth centuries, Brigus probably showed a similar pattern to that found for the rest of Conception Bay with a great excess of male to female servants indicative of a population still characterized by transhumance at least among the working class and with continuing high levels of both immigration and emigration, both back to Great Britain and on to England's mainland North American colonies.

2. The foundations of settlement, 1776-1815

It was the seal fishery that was probably the real economic foundation of a truly settled society in Brigus and Newfoundland as a whole (Ryan, 1994). In 1791, during the short period of peace between the American and French Revolutions and when the North Coast-Labrador fishery was well established, Conception Bay was home to about 560 households composed of 558 masters or planters, 346 mistresses, mostly the wives of planters, and 2590 children.[20] These planters and planter families employed 1577 mostly migrant fishery servants, composed of 1187 men, 390 women. Many of these migrant fishery servants returned to Britain on an annual basis while others stayed on for a two or three year contract and yet others used their employment at the Newfoundland fishery as a method of passage to Britain's mainland North American colonies.

As had been the case in earlier wars, during the American and French Revolutions and the Napoleonic Wars, for records purposes 1786-1815, the inhabitant fishery increased relative to the migratory fishery due to the dangers involved in the annual trans-Atlantic voyage and to the dramatic increase in the price of dried cod. Disturbances in the supply of labourers caused by the war meant that servants were harder to get from Britain while those fishery servants who were at Newfoundland were much more inclined to stay the winter or a number of winters in Newfoundland, as much from fear of Royal Navy press gangs as of the French or Americans. In order to maintain production, in the context of a labour shortage, many of the West Country planter-merchants abandoned their role as planters (i.e., direct production of dried cod) and increasingly began supplying and setting up smaller independent planters. This resulted in an increase in the relative numbers of masters and a decline in the ratio of servants to masters and an increase in the importance of family labour. This in turn served to increase year-round settlement as masters, mistresses and children were less migratory than servants (see Innis, 1954, pp. 305-306; Matthews, 1968, p. 469).

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[20] It is not clear what proportion of these children were the offspring of the planter families and what proportion were strictly child servants or the children of servants, though the great majority would have probably been the children of masters and mistresses.

Evidence for this around Conception Bay is found in changes in the median ratio of servants to masters and the percentage of the adult population who were servants, both male and female. In the period from 1720 through 1749 the median value for the ratio of servants to masters was 5.3 to one for the summer population and 4.4 to one for the winter population; in the same period servants made up a median value of 74% of the adult population during the summers and 70% for the winters. For the period from 1750 through 1764 the median values were 6.4 and 5.6 and the median percentages were 77 and 76 respectively for the summer and winter populations. For the years 1776 through 1798 the ratio of servants to masters fell to 2.8 to one for the summer population (though records of the summer population are very incomplete for these years) and 2.9 to one for the winter; meanwhile the servants made up a median value of 63% of the adult population for both the summer and winter populations (see Figures 4.3 and 4.2). However, with the end of the war, this apparent shift away from capitalist relations of production, would prove to be illusionary.

Like the original rise of the English codfishery in the sixteenth century linked to the 'commercial revolution' (Davis, 1967) of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the rise of the seal fishery was linked to major changes in the British and world economy—the 'industrial revolution' of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The huge advances in industrial production and the concomitant rapid rise in urbanization in eighteenth century Britain resulted in an increasing and virtually unlimited demand for oil products such as those produced by the spring seal fishery (see Ryan, 1994, pp. 72-81).

a. Impact of seal fishery on settlement

The rise in the seal fishery was also linked with global political changes. Great Britain had imported significant quantities of whale oil from its New England colonies in the eighteenth century and with the outbreak of the American War of Independence these imports ceased. Consequently, seal oil had a ready market (Ryan, 1994); what Newfoundland lacked was a technology and a population, in particular a winter population, to undertake it.

A sporadic fall-winter seal fishery had taken place along the north-east coast of Newfoundland and at Labrador since the early part of the eighteenth century. However, this fishery was too erratic and uncertain to sustain a large settled population. The more northern districts such as Trinity and Bonavista were the centres of this trade but production varied dramatically by year. Around Conception Bay the winter seal fishery was less productive and even more erratic than further north. In this winter or landsmen's fishery seals were generally caught in nets along headlands and through passages between islands during the fall to early winter migrations of the seals southward (Chafe, 1923; Gosling, 1910, 380; Head, 1976; Ryan, 1994), as was done until quite recently in Labrador. From time to time the sheet ice, upon which the seals have whelped, came close enough to shore that people were able to go directly, or via small fishing boats, onto the ice to kill and haul ashore large quantities of younger, and fatter, seals which would be rendered into oil.

Until new methods of catching seals were developed in the mid-1790s, Conception Bay was far less important in the seal fishery than was the area north of Cape Bonavista. There was an initial increase in the seal fishery starting around 1770 but Conception Bay was not directly involved in it (Head, 1976).

The beginning of the spring seal fishery around Conception Bay can be quite precisely dated from the historical records and by examining the records of the seal harvests from the eighteenth century. According to Chafe (1923), two small schooners sailing out of St. John's prosecuted the seal fishery for the first time in the spring of 1795 and in 1796 four sealing schooners went to the ice in the spring from St. John's and an unknown number went from the different ports in Conception Bay, probably including Brigus. Rev. William Thorsby, a Methodist missionary, reported that in April of 1797 the spring seal fishery was being carried on from Brigus (quoted in Lench, 1925, p. 3). The records of the seal harvests show that prior to the year 1796 the seal harvests, while showing marked variation from year to year, were generally at a level well below that found from 1796 onwards (Lewis, 1988). The year 1796, consistent with later histories, was clearly the beginning of a dramatic rise in the value of seal products, the number of seals, the vessels, and the number of men employed.

Instead of awaiting the uncertain arrival of seals and of ice, the winter residents of Conception Bay and of St. John's began to search out the seal herds on the ice in open ocean. Shallops, small open vessels, were employed at the start but shortly after that larger, decked schooners were introduced. These larger vessels, made in Newfoundland specifically for the seal fishery, allowed longer and more profitable voyages to the seal herds at the front.

The rapidity of the growth and of technical changes in the spring seal fishery was dramatic. In the year 1798 the schooner *Active*, of 40 tons, owned and commanded by Wm. Munden master, was engaged in the spring seal fishery out of Brigus, it was one of the earliest schooners in the seal fishery and was probably the largest of the fewer than ten vessels operating out of Conception Bay at the time. By 1819 Wm. Munden was master and owner of the much larger schooner *Four Brothers* of 104 tons which was built in Brigus (Chafe, 1923) and was only one of the 140 which, in the following year, would average 58 tons. The sealing fleet as a whole grew dramatically as well, both in numbers and in the average size of the vessels employed. While the method by which the Royal Navy recorded seal harvests changed during this period from value to numbers and eventually ships and men involved, the rapid growth in the seal fishery is clear. From 1722 to 1795 (the year before the start of the spring seal fishery out of Conception Bay) the average value of seal products produced annually was £251 whereas from 1796 through 1802, in the first years of the spring seal fishery, £4016 were produced an increase of fifteenfold. Of equal importance the production was far less variable than it had been before the introduction of the spring seal fishery.

The growth of the spring seal fishery between 1800 and the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 was even more dramatic. In 1800 17,638 seals were taken by Conception Bay sealers, while for the period 1811 through 1815 the average number of seals taken annually had risen to nearly 70,000 (Lewis, 1988). In terms of the number of vessels employed, in 1803 there 21 schooners and 14 shallops, while for the period 1811 through 1815 there were on average 74 schooners, which had entirely displaced the smaller shallops (Lewis, 1988). The number of *men*[21] employed in the harvesting side of the industry showed similar growth: from 369 men in 1803 to 1152 for the period from 1811 through 1815, out of an average adult male winter population of 2665. The size of the average sealing crew also increased (see Figure 4.4).

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[21] There is no evidence of women working in the harvest of seals in the spring fishery (though women were involved in the shore based fishery at least in the occasional instances when ice came into shore, see Ryan, 1994, pp. 264-71).

b. The Labrador fishery

The Labrador fishery complemented the spring seal fishery in a number of respects. As mentioned above, ships from Conception Bay started to fish for cod in the area north of Cape Bonavista starting by at least 1760, later, when this area was closed to English and Newfoundland fishermen, many of the fishermen who had been fishing there shifted to fishing along the Labrador coast. At first the size of this fishery and the extent to which it was carried on by planters resident at Newfoundland is unclear. The number of vessels going to "the North or Labrador" was not recorded until 1804, when 49 vessels were listed as going from Conception Bay. The number of such vessels increased rapidly thereafter, to an average of 76 for the years 1811 through 1815.

The vessels used in the Labrador fishery operated much as did the fishing ships from the West Country in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their main purpose was to get fishing crews to and from Labrador, though some also served as a base of fishing and partial processing operations while there. The vessels which went to the spring seal fishery were well adapted for bringing fishing crews to Labrador. Their purpose at Labrador was not as specialized fishing vessels but rather primarily as freighters or coasters. Around Conception Bay the two fisheries complemented each other both in the major tools they utilized, in particular schooners, and in the relations of production under which they operated.

The great change which the seal fishery brought, and which would become more apparent with the end of the war, was that it gave the previously primarily migratory working class, the fishery servants, more of a reason to reside in Newfoundland on a year round basis and ultimately on a life-long basis. As long as the sole resource base at Newfoundland was the summer cod fishery, the argument that it was best suited to an essentially migratory fishery, albeit with a small, semi-permanent population of planters and their families, was hard to counter. A simple increase in the number of inhabitants at

Newfoundland did not make it any less "a great ship, dependent upon the mother country for every thing they eat, drink and wear or for the funds to procure them" (Reeves, 1793b, p. 172).

c. Need for public welfare

Fishing servants who returned to Britain at the end of their contract, even if they were unable to find work there in the winter, could at least expect to find relief under the Poor Laws. In eighteenth century Newfoundland, no such relief could be expected. In a "Land" where, "there is no Public Charity for the Sick and the Lame; even the Blind and Aged" (Thomas, 1968, p. 171) an unemployed fisherman could expect little. Any relief as could be expected came entirely from the good will and resources of a Naval Governor who was not present during those winter months when distress would have been most common. In 1803 Governor Gambier had questioned the Colonial Office on provision for relief of the poor in Newfoundland and the applicability of the English Poor Laws in Newfoundland. The Colonial Secretary's reply was that the legal opinion was that the English Poor Laws were not applicable in Newfoundland and, further, that the Governor had no authority to raise any money for poor relief (McLintock, 1941, p. 143).

As had happened to a lesser degree in previous periods of warfare, the Napoleonic War saw a massive influx of population due to a boom in the price of dried cod. This, combined with a deterioration of the situation in Ireland, a major source of migrant labour in the fishery since the early eighteenth century, resulted in a large influx of Irish to Newfoundland in search of work and encouraged by the high rates of pay which the economic boom in the saltfish industry had produced. As well, both the fishing servants and their resident masters had to deal with the usual difficulties migratory servants faced in getting to Newfoundland during periods of warfare from capture by the enemy or their own navy. The influx of people during the Napoleonic Wars resulted in a dramatic increase in the population of Conception Bay. Conception Bay had averaged 5,712 *inhabitants* in the

1790s during the summer and 3,452 during the winter, by the first decade of the nineteenth century the average population had risen to 9,524 during the summer and 6,536 during the winter. The years 1810-1815 saw the population increase further yet to an average of 13,415 during the summer and 9896 during the winter (see Figure 4.1).

II. The Elderly in Newfoundland Society, 1650 to 1815

How did the elderly survive in Newfoundland in this period? With virtually no mention of the elderly in the Newfoundland historical record from the period—though in itself that is evidence—most of what can be said must remain speculative. Many nineteenth and twentieth century nationalists argued that the seventeenth and eighteenth century planters and their servants were *natural* or *incipient* Newfoundlanders, thwarted in becoming so by an English colonial policy which saw them instead as Englishmen (sometimes Irishmen) temporarily fishing from that 'great English ship moored near the Banks'. However, for the masters and mistresses, their servants, and even their children, Newfoundland probably was a temporary fishing station. In so far as they conceived of an old age in their lives it probably was seen to be in England or Ireland rather than in Newfoundland. At least a few doubtless kept working, either as the owner of a fishing room or some other establishment, such as a public house, or as the servant of a merchant or a planter. While some may have lived with families of one sort or another, the uncertainty of the fishery, the high cost of living relative to Britain, and the relatively low cost of return passage[22] probably meant that this was rare.

Among the merchants and planters it would seem probable that many, perhaps most, returned to England with what ever *fortune* they had made in the fishery or with the promise of living on Public Charity if they had none. It seems unlikely that many moved on to New England as younger people clearly did because public relief would not be available to them there. As mentioned above, there is little evidence in the seventeenth century of any significant numbers of dependent elderly, even among the merchant and planters.

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[22] Which doubtless also goes to explaining "the Instances the Merchants cite, when they say they have brought many Home without taking any Thing for their Passage" (Reeves, 1793, p. 88)

There is even less evidence for such among the bulk of the population composed of fishing servants. For such fishing servants *retirement* from the Newfoundland fishery was an event initiated in Britain rather than in Newfoundland. For the vast majority of such workers this did not involve a return to the British Isles from Newfoundland but rather the cessation of voyages to the fishery at Newfoundland and in many cases the decision was probably made for them by the unwillingness of employers to hire older workers for the fishery. Handcock's (1989) figures for immigrants to Newfoundland for the period 1750 to 1830 also show low numbers of aged persons. Handcock shows that the vast majority of the labour force was made up of those between the ages of sixteen and thirty years and less than ten percent remained in the Newfoundland fishery beyond age forty—mostly captains, mates, and skilled tradesmen.

Probably few aged individuals, mostly in St. John's, lived off of what came "from the hands of Private Individuals", i.e., they were forced to go begging; though this must have been a most precarious existence. There was no civil government to provide relief at the time and that which could be expected from the naval government was restricted and uncertain. The most consistent relief measure offered by the Naval governors was to return of the needy to England or Ireland, which would probably have been welcomed by any aged servant abandoned at Newfoundland. Handcock (1989) gives numerous examples of individuals and families in the period after 1776 returning to their home parish in England, even though they and sometimes their parents were born at Newfoundland, in order to receive poor relief.

While the development of resources which allowed for more winter work at the end of the eighteenth century doubtless increased the numbers of year-round residents it probably did not immediately translate into an equal increase in the number life-long ones or in the aged. Despite the growth in economic activity there was little growth in the institutions of settled society. While a supreme court had been established at Newfoundland in 1792, much of the legal system continued to be run by the Royal Navy, which also served as the government for the not yet colony, though only during the summer months (English, 1990). As early as 1730 the Attorney-General had determined that the governor of Newfoundland had no power to levy rates or impose taxes without the consent of some sort of assembly of the people. The decision had been reaffirmed in 1803 in relation to poor relief (McLintock, 1941).

Workers from England and Ireland came from a social formation within which support for the poor, always a significant proportion of the population on a seasonal basis and among sections of the population, in particular the aged, came from the collectivity much more than from kin networks outside the nuclear family (Laslett, 1988). Such a system of relief was *paid for* by the government constituted by a landowning gentry class who, at least nominally, paid for and administered the system, i.e., the old Poor Laws.[23] Without such a system in place, Newfoundland must have hardly seemed a settled society, or a place of life-long residence, for servants coming from Britain. Proof of this is found in the character of the political debates of the 1830s (discussed in detail in the next section).

III. The Establishment of Settled Society, 1815-1860

By 1815, the population of Conception Bay had increased to close to 12,000 people. However, the post-war depression in cod prices of 1815-1818 which followed the end of the war, and which in turn was an aspect of a more general, North Atlantic depression, promised to return Newfoundland to little more than a migratory fishing station, composed of a small, semi-permanent population of planters and their families dependent on essentially migratory English and Irish servants. However, as Ryan (1994) has convincingly argued, the growing seal fishery, combined with the summer Labrador cod fishery, provided increased work and, more importantly, work during the winter months. The seal fishery became the crucial link in the survival of a substantial settled fishery in Newfoundland and was the foundation of a truly settled society. Settled society was in turn the basis for Newfoundland's change from a fishing station to a colony.

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[23] Of course the Poor Laws were not established simply to relieve the suffering of the poor, but instead also served the interests of agricultural land owners by lowering labour costs (see Boyer 1990).

The seal and Labrador fisheries were central, at least at first, in the growth and development of the Conception Bay district.[24] These two linked industries served as the foundation for the growth of Conception Bay as the most vibrant area of economic activity in the island and were in turn central to an understanding of the social structure of the district. During the first half of the nineteenth century Conception Bay came to dominate the island's seal fishery and with it the colony's politics and economy. By the 1820s the seal fishery had become the chief industry of all the larger Conception Bay communities, especially Brigus and the growth of Brigus followed that of the seal fishery.

Between about 1810 and 1836 the population of Brigus probably[25] grew at an annual rate of better than 5%. In the period from 1810 to 1820 a good part of that increase would have been due to immigration from Britain while after 1820 most of the increase would have been from natural increase and immigration from within Newfoundland. Evidence for this is found in the decline in the number of immigrants found on the censuses. In 1857, the first census in which the place of birth is recorded, just over 10% of the population were born outside of Newfoundland, when those who came in the influx associated with the Napoleonic Wars would have been 40 years old and over, in 1869 this had dropped to 6.3%, 1874 to 5%, 1884 2.7%, and the figure remained between 1 and 2% from 1891through 1921 (Figures calculated from published Newfoundland censuses Colonial Secretary's Office [Newfoundland], 1914; Colonial Secretary's Office [Newfoundland], 1923; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1845; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1858; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1870; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1876; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1886; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1893; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1903).

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[24] The seal fishery was also important to St. John's, however, the city also served as the islands general commercial centre and the seat of much government based economic activity.

[25] 'Probably' because the figure for 1810 is only a rough estimate (see Lewis, 1988, p. 225).

The seal fishery based in Conception Bay continued to grow through the 1820s with the number of vessels reaching a peak of 221 vessels in 1832 and the total tonnage in 1857 (see Figures 4.4 and 4.5). The increase in the seal fishery encompassed more than the simple increase in the number of producers, which would have been expected if the seal fishery were organized around household production. Instead the growth of the seal fishery shows the classic pattern of capitalist growth, growth in the forces of production, with the average tonnage of sealing vessels going from a bit less than 60 tons per vessel in the decade centred on 1820 to almost 125 tons per vessel in the period 1860-65, and with an increase in labour productivity, with the number of men per ton of vessel burthen declining from an average of 3.57 men per ton in the decade centred on 1820 to less than 2.55 per ton in the decade centred on 1860 (see Figure 4.6). The construction of larger vessels continued through to the first decades of the twentieth century and ultimately led to the concentration of capital in St. John's and the decline of Conception Bay. The seal fishery around Conception Bay peaked in the 1857 with 7,743 men, equivalent to over

90% of the male population between 15 and 50, going to the seal fishery from Conception Bay.[26]

With the return of peace in 1815, and with the end of many of the difficulties faced by planters in getting labourers, the demographic composition of Newfoundland society returned to something more like the pre-war character. The class structure of early nineteenth century Newfoundland continued to be dominated, at least numerically, by a proletarian class of free labourers, working either for set wages or on a modified piece work basis (shares). Now, however, many more of these servants were essentially permanent residents of Newfoundland, though significant number continued to come to Newfoundland from Britain on an annual basis. In the period from 1816 through 1826 the median ratio of servants to masters for the summer population rose to almost six to one (5.98) and over five to one (5.24) for the winter while servants made up 77 and 70% of the summer and winter adult populations respectively.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars and the subsequent fall of the price of dried cod, seems to have led to the break up of a number of the larger merchant firms, most of which were still based in Britain, which in turn led smaller capitalists to set up businesses in the outports opening the door to competition. In Brigus the firm of George and James Kemp & Co., which had established a substantial business, including a dock for building vessels and an accounting house, which they had leased for 40 years at £6 a year, during the boom period at the turn of the century, pulled out by 1820 selling their premises to Charles Cozens, formerly a cooper in their employ, who set up a truly resident merchant firm. Cozens was later to become the first Member of the House of Assembly for the district and J.P. Meanwhile the remaining larger houses concentrated their operations at St. John's and some of the larger outports such as Harbour Grace and supplied outport merchants and planters with goods paid for either in fish and oil or cash. This was particularly evident around the Avalon peninsula where "The fisherman may carry his fish to any one he chooses and though he cannot fix the price at which it shall be sold, as the merchants fix that by common consent from the state of the foreign markets he has still the great benefit of competition in the choice of the provisions and goods he is to buy." (Jukes, 1842, pp. 234-35)

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[26] Clearly men were also coming from outside of Conception Bay to work as sealers.

In sum, at the end of the Napoleonic Wars Newfoundland found itself in a new situation with a significant sized, verging on settled, population (i.e., life-long residents, at least among planters and their families) and a growing industry which could supply people with winter work, i.e., the seal fishery. At least around Conception and Trinity Bays, the seal fishery enabled resident planters to achieve a measure of economic independence and power. A planter-schooner captain could obtain credit from merchant firms eager to secure supplies of seal oil in order to build and fit out a sealing and Labrador schooner. Many of these planters paid off their debt in a few years and became independent schooner owners. The growth of ship-building this produced resulted in the bringing over of skilled craftsmen—like Nicholas Smith (senior), ship's carpenter, who came from Dartmouth to St. John's in 1839 and then moved on to Brigus (Smith, 1936)—many of whom also attained the position of independence and middle-class status. "Thus," by the 1830s,

> Newfoundland already possessed a nicely graded and quite self sufficient class structure. Merchants were 'Esquire', schooner owners and master craftsmen 'Mr', poorer (but independent) fishermen went by their full name (e.g., 'John Barnes') while servants had no name at all. (Matthews, 1968, p. 596)

All that Newfoundland lacked, as a settled society was any regular form of government.[27]

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[27] This model of the political economy of Conception Bay is fundamentally at odds with that recently presented by Cadigan (1995) who, like much earlier historians (especially Prowse 1895, p. 380), argues that the family fishery and the truck system were essentially coeval with the resident fishery. The arguments countering this, which Cadigan did not address or cite, are found in Lewis 1988 and 1990.

In Brigus the cast of the community was such that the prominent sealing schooner owners/masters, who generally also engaged in mercantile activity, the Bartletts, Mundens, Normans, et al., were at least the social equals of the local, merchants the Leamons, Jerretts, and Hiscocks,[28] while the class of 'servants', in the sense of wage workers (see Appendix C for a discussion of the dangers in the interpretation of this term) would have made up a larger portion of the population than in more isolated communities.

The class structure of Conception Bay in general and of Brigus in particular and the relations of production which dominated its two major fisheries were established in this period and showed no radical changes during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While in the latter part of the nineteenth century the economy was to enter a period of decline it was not marked by the replacement of the dominant relations of production.

Contrary to the arguments of Antler (1975) and Sider (1986) there is little evidence that the dominant relations of production in Brigus and the Labrador fishery, commonly referred to as *the planter fishery*, were replaced by a *family fishery* nor is there for the older argument, which has been recently revived by Cadigan (1995), that there was never anything but the *family fishery*. The planter fishery remained the dominant form of productive relations in the Labrador fishery up until the Second World War. The planter fishery characteristic of the Labrador and seal fisheries of Brigus and Conception Bay was essentially and overtly capitalist in character. It was capitalist because the basic productive unit of both fisheries was the crew which was composed of the capitalist planter who, albeit often on a small scale, both nominally and effectively owned the means of production, i.e., sealing vessel, fishing gear, room, etc., necessary to conduct those fisheries. The planter purchased both the means of production and wage goods from merchants—

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[28] These family names were not exclusive to the dominant classes in Brigus, there were other individuals with the same family names who were members of the Brigus working classes.

other capitalists, many of whom were also involved directly in the fisheries. The planter bought labour power from fishing servants, who were paid either in set wages or on a piece work basis (*shares*). The fishing servants were dependent on the planter for the wages necessary to purchase their subsistence. A fuller discussion of this argument can be found in Lewis (1990).

The basic class division in Brigus was between merchants/planters and fishing servants. The basic (non-class) division between merchants and planters was the extent to which they dealt directly with fishing servants in the productive process. In practice, at least after the failure of J. & G. Smith in 1882 (Smith, 1936), virtually all merchants in Brigus were also involved, to differing degrees, in the direct production of fish and, perhaps, of seals, while many, though not most, planters were also involved in mercantile activities. It would seem that from at least the 1830s that the financing ('supplying') of the seal fishery and the manufacture of seal oil began to shift to St. John's and, to a lesser degree to Harbour Grace (though the figures on this are sketchy, see *{Ryan, 1994 #374, pp. 121-135). The Brigus merchant firms were not the large, vertically integrated companies which dominated both supply and production in Carbonear (see Neis, 1980, pp. 121-123), nor the large, more strictly mercantile firms of Harbour Grace. Some of the firms operated as C.A. Jerrett did:

> I had fishermen catching fish for me. Outside of that I would buy from any person I could buy from. I supply planters and fishermen as well. I exported fish last year on my own account. It went abroad by sailing vessels. (The Mail and Advocate, 1915)

Up to at least 1934, C.A. Jerrett had "...between 25 and 30 crews of his own on the coast [of Labrador], as well as a number of crews whom he will supply." (The [Bay Roberts'] Guardian, 1934); while others, like J. W. Hiscock, had only one crew fishing directly for them and the firm seems to have secured essentially all of their dried cod through mercantile activity rather than by direct production. Both the Jerretts and the Hiscocks also retailed goods at Brigus, though this was a sideline to their Labrador business. The Brigus merchants were supplied in turn, on credit, by the large St. John's import/export firms.

The planters ranged in size from those such as the Bartletts, to those operating with little more than (at least at some stage in the family life cycle) family labour. The Bartletts were famous as sealing captains, and in Arctic exploration, and fished out of their station at Turnavik, near the northern limit of the Labrador stationer fishery. The station had been in existence from at least the 1870s and by the early twentieth century, under Captain William Bartlett, employed upwards of "a hundred and fifty men, women, boys and girls catching and curing the cod," mostly working on shares, fishing over five to six miles of coast (Bartlett, 1928, p. 106; House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1905, pp. 237-238). In the first part of the nineteenth century the Bartletts had been major seal vessel owners and in fact had been one of the first to invest in steam vessels for that fishery. On the basis of the wealth they made in the seal fishery they came to be among the, and at times the, leading family in the community. However, later in the century, with the substitution of sailing vessels by steam, they no longer owned the vessels which they continued to captain for the large St. John's firms. The Bartletts were also involved in the supply business, though to what extent is unclear. By the mid-1920s the Bartlett's fishing station seems to have passed out of the family's hands. According to Robert Bartlett (1934), who ran the station for a few years in the twenties, a series of poor seasons, low prices for dried cod, and difficulties in getting crews for the station were the causes of this. The larger planters were supplied by the same firms and on the same basis as the Brigus merchants, i.e., by the large St. John's or Harbour Grace import/export firms.

Most planters operated on a much smaller scale than did the Bartletts. Some, like Nicholas Smith, were relatively prosperous and "worked together [with his wife, though she never seems to have gone to Labrador with him] through life not knowing what it was to want; we always had an independent dollar at our disposal" (1936, p. 88). Other planters were economically little better off than fishing servants and some fishing units did not employ any hired labour and depended, instead, entirely on family labour. However, that type of fishing unit was not separable as a class or a mode of production, from those planters depending entirely on hired labour, like Nicholas Smith. Rather, the former are better understood as employing either a personal strategy, a symptom of lack of success, or of fortuitous family growth, i.e., enough offspring of the right age willing to work as partners. So dominant were wage relations in the Brigus Labrador fishery that it was more often the case that, where a crew was made up of children of the planter along with hired servants—hired either on shares or for set wages—those sons and daughters most often worked on exactly the same basis as servants did, i.e., for wages or shares, and alongside the regular servants. Speaking about the early part of the twentieth century a former fisherman described the economic relations existing in his father's fishing crew:

> Anyhow all hands had to go on the same, we got together, and when we came out of it we never had a cent, not a copper. My father [the planter] didn't, well he was worse than me because I was on the shares then, see, and I had eighty dollars, that's not a month, that's, that's what I had, now, clear, we'll say, that's what I had to buy a bit of food for the winter.... (Lewis, 1984a)

In other words, the family relationships within the planter fishery took on the character of wage relationships—though their character within the domestic sphere may have been different—rather than, as Cadigan (1995) has argued, production being dominated by household production and family labour.

Both planters and merchants depended on the labour of servants for their continued survival as a class. From the standpoint of status and personal wealth, many planters were no better off than the servants working for them. Without doubt some servants become planters and many planters sank back into the ranks of labour. As well smaller planters, especially as the century progressed, were often labourers themselves during the seal fishery, as there were always fewer sealing schooner owners than there were summer codfishery planters. However, none of this erases the basic division between servants and planters/merchants. The acceptance of the *family fishery* orthodoxy and the normal difficulties involved in doing working class history has meant that the working class history of Conception Bay and St. John's is still very incomplete.

Much of the history of workers in the fishery must come from the accounts of their employers. The best of these is the autobiography of Nicholas Smith (1936). Smith was orphaned at age 13 or 14, in the year 1876[29] and began working as a servant for a planter (albeit his brother-in-law). It is only in those early years when he was working for others that he make reference to his fellow crew members, using the common Newfoundland term "Uncle" (Story, Kirwin & Widdowson, 1982, pp. 591-592) to refer to unrelated older adults (Smith, 1936). Later, after he became a planter and had his own crew, in those few situations where Smith does mention fishing servants they are simply "men and boys, as well as some girls" (Smith, 1936, p. 70), "my crew" (pp. 38, 63), "my men" (pp. 40, 61), with their names never given. Where they are mentioned it is usually in the context of hiring or in the payment of wages:

> I went to St. John's and fixed up with Job Bros. & Co., after which I returned to Brigus and paid off all my men with good wages, they being on the shares. After all just debts were paid I had a nice fat cheque remaining to my credit, which wasn't so bad for an "Oil Jacket Planter". (Smith, 1936, p. 126)

Smith's crews seemed to be typical of small to medium sized planters with the crew, except for the "girls", working on shares. The fishing crew, per se, was made up entirely of "men and boys" who received their wages based on a share of the catch, a full share being half of the production of the voyage, but not including the cod oil, divided by the number of men in the crew, with the planter being allotted one of these shares. Women—virtually always young and unmarried "girls"—were paid a small, fixed wage for cooking, cleaning, etc. The larger planters/merchants like Jerrett seem to have been more likely (though information on this is sketchy) to have their crews working on fixed wages—referred to as being 'shipped' as opposed to being 'on shares'—and to employ women in their operations. However, the payment of wages at a fixed rate ('shipped') as opposed to payment on a modified piece-work basis[30] ('on shares'), was simply a *business* strategy rather than any evidence, as Antler (1975) has argued, of differing modes of production. Larger scale planters were generally in a better position to take such risks though many like the Bartletts did not, hiring their crews on shares, (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1905, p. 237). Some smaller planters also were willing to take the risks associated with paying crews a fixed wage. A small scale planter fishing on the Labrador from the early part of the twentieth century did so and gave the logic behind his decision to do so:

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[29] Some of Smith's dates, especially the early ones, are confused. He was born in 1864 or 1865 (he claimed June 1865 in the 1921 census), his father died in 1878, not in 1874 as he claims and which, if it were true, would have meant that he was born in 1860 (Smith 1936, p. 15).

> Where I went to I'd rather take them [his crew] shipped, because it never failed, but now to go into a harbour where fish is very uncertain, then I'd rather take them on the shares and run their own chance. But now the White Bears have never failed, so ... I took them shipped, so you'd get a fairly good man at that time, a good man too, a twine man and all that stuff, for a hundred dollars anyway, and probably seventy or eighty dollars, in them days. (Lewis, 1984a)

By the mid-1820s the migratory servants of the previous centuries had developed into a "politically aware and volatile working class" (Ryan, 1994, p. 342), at least in the island's population centres, Conception Bay and St. John's. Conception Bay had a long tradition of working class activism throughout the nineteenth century. Strikes took place in Harbour Grace and Carbonear against merchants' attempts to force the payment of wage in the seal and cod fisheries in truck in 1832 (Little, 1984; 1995). Rioting during the elections of 1836 and the by-election of 1840 all were at least partly expressions of working class dissatisfaction, though religion was also an issue. The sealing strike which took place in Brigus and Harbour Main in 1845, mostly over berth charges (a fee sealers paid in order to work on the sealing vessels), is particularly illuminating. While the spokesman for the sealers' committee was a Captain Supple from St. John's the two contending parties were the "Committee of Sealers" and, on the other side, the "Committee on the part of the Merchants and Schooner-holders", composed predominantly of the prominent schooner masters of Brigus (The Patriot and Terra Nova Herald, 1845).

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[30] Modified because the payment was averaged across the whole crew, this was because the use of the cod trap made division by individual production impossible to determine. However, where individual fishing techniques were used, like handlining, then shares were determined in terms of what each individual caught.

A. Development of the state

The institutions of law and government lagged behind the other developments in Newfoundland society. While a supreme court had been established at Newfoundland in 1792, much of the legal system continued to be run by the Royal Navy. The Royal Navy also served as the government for the not yet colony, though only during the summer months (English, 1990). The first over-wintering naval governor attempted to stay the winter of 1817-1818, though he didn't actually survive it. Naval governors continued to serve until 1825 and the last Naval courts, the surrogate courts, were abolished in 1824. In 1825 Sir Thomas Cochrane became the first civil governor, *guided* by an appointed council, at Newfoundland. One of the first problems the governor addressed was that of government assistance to the poor. Previously relief had been given on an ad-hoc basis and without condition and Cochrane attempted to put pauper labour to work on road construction around St. John's (Gunn, 1966, p. 4). However, he found that he had no legal ability to establish poor rates or other forms of local taxation to fund that work. As early as 1730 the Attorney-General had determined that the governor of Newfoundland had no power to levy poor rates or impose taxes without the consent of some sort of assembly of the people and the decision had been reaffirmed in 1803 in relation to poor relief (McLintock, 1941).

Faced with this and with widespread local pressure for self-government and full colonial status, in 1832 the British Parliament passed legislation granting Newfoundland the standard British North American "transcript" of the British constitution, as was provided to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. This provided for a popularly elected legislature along with an appointed council. While the constitutional framework was standard North American issue, the result of its application, in the rather different situation found in Newfoundland, was unique in North America. The sort of property, i.e., landed property, qualifications which were central in most British colonial governments could not be simply applied to Newfoundland where landed property was not the important form of productive property. Seemingly as a result of being unable to conceive of any other system of granting power to propertied interests, the franchise granted was, by the standards of the nineteenth century, extremely wide, with the vote being given to all registered male householders, both owners and tenants, without regard to property value or annual rent (for a discussion of this see Gunn, 1966; McLintock, 1941). This resulted in virtual universal male suffrage and the wide franchise was to have important effects on the character of the Newfoundland state.

The history of the Newfoundland state started with a series of 'lively' elections resulting in the election of Liberal governments backed by the working class of Conception Bay and St. John's in alliance, at first, with the Catholic Church. The debates which followed the first elections in the Newfoundland House of Assembly and between the Liberal dominated Assembly and the appointed and decidedly Tory Legislative Council provide insights into the ethos of what constituted settled society, publicly supported relief, and the relationship between them.

In the legislative session of 1838 there were continuing struggles between Council and Assembly over, among other things, the Assembly's appointment of commissioners of poor relief and road boards. The debates revolved around bills within which the Assembly attempted to appoint poor relief commissioners and the character of Supply Bills which was also linked to poor relief. However, the underlying conflict was over whether the Assembly or the Governor and Council would have pre-eminence and ultimately over the question of whether Newfoundland should be a settled society at all. In the Assembly's justifications in arguing for the preeminence of the House of Assembly in these matters, the Liberals argued that the relationship between the Assembly and the Governor and Council should be different than that found in some of the other British North American colonies, in particular Canada and New Brunswick. They argued that it should be different because the situation and history of Newfoundland was importantly different from Canada and New Brunswick. In those mainland colonies a native landowning gentry class had been created "having all their interests in common with the interests of the body of the people," because of the "fostering care exhibited by the British Government towards their agricultural improvement," (Colonial Office, 1838, p. 407). In Newfoundland, on the other hand, they argued that the Imperial Government had acted quite differently. On the advice of "merchants and adventurers" the Imperial Government had "at first to forbid residence, then to restrain settlement, anon to decry agriculture; in fine, to fetter the resources, and cramp the energies, and blast the prospects of the people." As a result of this:

> Native gentry there is none; a resident landed proprietary there does not exist, and consequently society in this colony is reduced to two classes, the one mercantile, composed not of native, but stranger "merchants and adventurers," and indeed to a considerable extent even these non-resident, to whom may be added the officers of the Government, all strangers too; the other, the humble fishermen,whose destinies are riveted to the soil of their nativity. (Colonial Office, 1838, p. 407)

Newfoundland lacked the native landowning gentry who would naturally have arisen except for the machinations of "stranger 'merchants and adventurers'". Therefore, they argued, that the popularly elected Assembly must serve that role (Colonial Office, 1838,

p. 407).[31] That to a man the reformers in the House of Assembly were not native born either, (Gunn, 1966, p. 70, most having emigrated from Ireland), and that there were basic class divisions within the broad group of 'humble fishermen', some of whom were employers and most of whom were their employees, did not seem to bother them.

The arguments made by the Assembly are clearly based on the same principles as were employed in the previous two centuries in arguing that Newfoundland was not suitable for a settled society. The argument made against settlement had been that settled society could only be based on agriculture and, as Newfoundland was clearly not a suitable site for agriculture, with 'fertile fields' as common as 'cinnamon groves', the island was not suitable for settled society. The link between the progress of settled society and the progress of agriculture was equally self-evident to the reformers. If Newfoundland were truly not suitable for significant agricultural development then within the ethos of both the Liberal-reformers and the "merchants and adventurers" it was not suitable for settled society, much less parliamentary democracy. Many of the "merchants and adventurers" had come by this time to agree with this conclusion, though most would have seemed to have supported representative government before it was established (Gunn, 1966, pp. 4-5). The reformers were left to argue that Newfoundland's great agricultural potential for development had only been set back by a plot on the part of foreign interests, who somehow could stop that development simply by stating that it was not possible.

On the face of it the Liberal-reformers's argument was absurd. Despite numerous efforts over nearly two centuries, much undertaken by merchants hoping to decrease their costs of production, Newfoundland's agricultural production was minimal. It is clear that in an absolute sense Newfoundland's agricultural potential was extremely limited and in the context of an Atlantic economy, within which more favoured regions on the mainland were experiencing rapid agricultural development and resulting decreasing food prices, agricultural production would only be supplementary, increasing in periods of economic depression and falling off in periods of prosperity (see Crabb, 1975, pp. 68-106). As one 'Investigator' in 1847 put it:

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[31] In fact, "repeated conflicts between the Executive and the popular branches of the legislature" were endemic to all the British North American colonies (Lord Durham, 1963, p. 52), whether there was the "presence of resident landed proprietary" interests or not.

> With an immense and unrivalled corn growing continent within a few days sail of us, it would be the height of folly to attempt any separate division of labour of that sort as to lead the people to expect that they would, or could, derive any advantage from a competition with their more favoured neighbours. As well might you attempt to establish a rival cod-fishery among the Allegheny mountains. (quoted in Cadigan, 1995, p. 134)

But the continuing centrality of the development of agriculture, and later other land based resources, in popular political discourse cannot, as Cadigan (1995) argues, simply be dismissed as a Chimera sold by unscrupulous reformist politicians to a politically naïve working population. To abandon the hope that there was more to Newfoundland than just the summer cod fishery—which the seal fishery actually was and later developments such as the railway were meant to be—was to admit that Newfoundland really should be nothing more than a great ship, that the West Country merchants had been correct in arguing that the vast majority of Newfoundland fishermen would be far better off resorting to Newfoundland on a migratory basis only, and that economic improvement for the vast majority of the population lay in emigration. No politician, much less one looking for wide popular support, could have hoped for any success attempting to persuade the electorate of that.

B. The Limits of a Fishing Based Society, 1860-1921

The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by a long decline in the Newfoundland economy, at least relative to the rest of North America, and a series of political and financial crises. The period from 1860 to 1945, and especially the two decades before the turn of the century, was marked by a rapid decline in the population of

Brigus and a corresponding decline in economic activity and prosperity of the community. The population probably peaked about the year 1880 at approximately 2,500 (see Table 3.1). Between the 1884 census and that of 1891 the population dropped from 2,365 to 1,541, representing an annual per capita decrease in population of over four per cent; a rate which, if it had continued, would have seen the population halve every 17 years. Its population continued to decrease after that, though at a less precipitous rate, reaching 936 in 1921. This represented an annual, per capita decrease between 1911 and 1921 of close to one per cent.

The Newfoundland cod fishery as a whole experienced a long term per capita decline in the nineteenth century (Ryan, 1986, p. xxiv). The period from 1860-1914 saw a decline in prices and a general stagnation in volume caught, at least at first, in the context of an increasing population. The price decline was even worse in the Labrador fishery which was hardest hit by increasing international competition from Norway, Iceland, and France. As well the commercial aspects of the trade became increasingly concentrated in St. John's, at the expense of outports such as Harbour Grace, Carbonear, and Brigus.

The problems in the cod fishery were combined with and compounded by problems in the seal fishery. The increasing substitution of seal oil by electricity and petroleum products for lighting and lubrication, lead to sustained and significant decline in the price of seal oil starting in the 1860s (Ryan, 1994). This decline in price was at least part of the reason for the reorganization of the industry. Like the financing ("supplying") of the cod fishery, the seal industry became concentrated in St. John's (and in any case many of the same firms were involved in both industries). First the manufacture of seal oil was centralized in St. John's and later the rise in the use of steam vessels, owned by St. John's firms, lead to the rapid decline and demise of the locally owned sailing seal fleet which was virtually complete by the 1880s.

The decline in both the cod fishery, especially in its Labrador branch, and the seal fishery lead to the near collapse in both industries by the late 1890s. From the 1860s the government had attempted to diversify the economy with, at best, limited success. A railway was put across the island in the hope of opening up untapped agricultural resources in the interior, which turned out not to exist. There was some success in expanding mining and lumbering but neither industry ever produced enough employment to substitute for the declining cod and seal fisheries. In the 1911 census there were 2,260 and 2,821 persons listed as engaged in mining and lumbering respectively, in the same census there were 42,846 men listed as "engaged in catching and curing fish" and 22,472 women listed as "engaged in curing fish", in Conception Bay there were 1,261 and 24 listed as engaged in mining and lumbering respectively while there were 6,701 men listed as "engaged in catching and curing fish" and 2,305 women listed as "engaged in curing fish", the respective figures for Brigus were 0, 2, 145, and 21. Ultimately the decline in Newfoundland's traditional economy and the inability to develop other industries would lead to Newfoundland's economic collapse and its demise as an independent political entity.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the decimation, as a class, of the politically aware and active working class of St. John's and Conception Bay and its role as the leading force in Newfoundland politics. The main response of the Conception Bay working class to this economic decline was emigration, from Brigus and Conception Bay as a whole, to the more economically prosperous areas of North America, especially the United States eastern seaboard as well as to Canada, with significant numbers going to the mines at North Sydney, Nova Scotia. Stavely (1977) estimates that between the 1857 and 1869 census the net emigration rate for the Port-de-Grave district was 0.7% per annum; with the rate for the 1869 to 1874 being 0.5%; 1874-1884, 0.0%; 1884-1891, 2.2%; 1891-1901, 1.7%; 1901-1911, 1.5%. If we assume that the rate of natural increase for Brigus was the same as that estimated by Stavely for the rest of Port-de-Grave then the equivalent net emigration rates for Brigus were 1857-1869 0.9%, 1869-1874 0.5%; 1874-1884, 0.9%; 1884-1891, 6.0%; 1891-1901, 0.6%; 1901-1911, 2.0%. The more extreme emigration rates for Brigus are indicative of the centrality of the seal and Labrador fisheries for the economy of the community.

The importance of the Labrador cod fishery declined somewhat in the economy of Brigus, going from an average of 90% of those listing an occupation on the four censuses before 1891 to just under 75% over the four census covering the period from 1891 to 1921.[32] However, it remained central to the economy and social formation of Brigus. The Labrador fishery, in particular the stationer fishery, of Conception Bay, probably began to decline from around the end of the first decade of the twentieth century and continued to decline through the 1920s. There was a halt in the decline and perhaps a slight increase in 1930s due to the return of former fishermen to the area, from industrial employment in other areas of North America, and the lack of any other employment in the area, along with some support for the fishery by the Commission Government. With the start of the Second World War and the employment boom it created in Newfoundland, however, the Labrador fishery dropped off rapidly.

Despite high rates of emigration and the general economic decline which marked this period, the Labrador fishery remained the economic base of the community and the relations of production which dominated the fishery and the class structure of Brigus showed no radical changes during the period of the community's decline. The gradual decline of the planters' fishery in Brigus in this period, especially in the latter part of this period, 1920 to 1930, was marked not by its replacement by some other set of relations of production within the fishery but rather by the gradual decline of the fishery and of the community as a whole. Much the same pattern of decline seems to have marked the other areas Conception Bay.

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[32] This excludes those in the "miscellaneous" category under occupation, which varied erratically across censuses and are not included in all of them.

The class character of Brigus remained much the same as that described by Matthews for the first half of the century. Nicholas Smith (1936), writing about the period from fifty to eighty years later, in listing the members of the Jubilee Club, "the influential men of our town, business men, schooner holders and owners, etc." (pp. 94-96), gives a similar nomological social classification of Brigus. While the term 'Esquire' seems to have disappeared, merchants are Mr., with initials added when necessary to avoid confusion, "Mr. G. C. Jerrett, Merchant, President" (G. C. Jerrett had two sons who were also merchants, in other places in Smith merchants are referred to as 'Mr. Family name'). Captains, the social if not always the economic equals of the merchants (though they often were merchants as well while retaining the title of Captain), are normally listed as such, "Capt. James Spracklin, Treasurer," "Capt. Moses Bartlett, Billiard Committee," and "Capt. Edmund Hiscock, Merchant." Professionals, "Mr. Thomas Kavanagh" druggist, men with government jobs, "Mr. Nath. Rabbitts, Telegraph-Operator, Vice-President," "Mr. James Strickland, Mailman from Avondale", independent craftsmen and tradesmen, "Mr. John O'Brien, Billiard Committee" (listed as tinsmith in 1921 census), and independent planters, "Mr. John Spracklin, Recording Secretary" and "The Writer, (afterwards Recording Secretary and Treasurer)" are all named Mr. along with a first and family name. Meanwhile fishing servants, not being members of the club, are entirely absent from this list.

IV. The elderly in Brigus and Newfoundland society, 1815 to 1920

A detailed history of the aged in nineteenth century has yet to be written for any area of Newfoundland. The aged either as a social category or as a 'problem' were rarely mentioned separately of widows and 'Crippled, aged, and disabled paupers'. However the aged were a consistently growing proportion of the population all through the period. At the beginning of this period there would have been very few elderly persons in Brigus or Conception Bay. In 1836, the first enumeration containing data on age, only slightly more than 2% (n = 28) of the population of Brigus was recorded as being over 60 years of age (the census does not list any age divisions smaller than this), while just under 2% (n = 463) were so for Conception Bay as a whole (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1836). The 1845, shown to be unreliable on other respects (see Lewis, 1990), gives almost 4% of the population being over 70 for Brigus and 1.3% for Conception Bay as a whole. However, the figures for 1857, 1.9% (n = 31, see Table 3.2) and 1.8% (n = 616) respectively, also suggest that the age figures from the 1845 are suspect. The high rate of emigration, in response to the declining economy, from the 1860s lead to a rapid change in the age structure of Brigus. The percentage of the population 70 years of age and older went from 1.9% in 1857 to almost 6.6% in 1935 and the percentage over 64 went from 5.5% in 1891 to 10.9% in 1935 (see Table 3.2).

A relatively high proportion of the aged would have been born outside of Newfoundland in the first part of the nineteenth century, in the majority of cases in either England or Ireland. While there is no cross-tabulation of age and place of birth in the 1857 census, without doubt the aged were over-represented among the 10% of the population born outside of Newfoundland, with 96% of those immigrants coming from England and Ireland (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1858). As a result of this as well, a higher number of elderly persons would have had no relatives in Newfoundland than would have been the case if there were fewer such immigrants.

The politically aware working class of Conception Bay and St. John's came from England and Ireland with long established conceptions of community (see Little, 1995 for a discussion of the transmission of other aspects of popular culture) within which support for the poor, always a significant proportion of the population on at least a seasonal basis, came from the collectivity much more than from kin networks outside the nuclear family, if they had functioning nuclear families (Laslett, 1988). Much of the political history of nineteenth century Newfoundland can be understood as at least partly the struggle of the working class to impose this conception of community on Newfoundland society. Proof of this is found in the character of the political debates of the 1830s.

A. The politics of relief: 'representative-beggars of a set of paupers'

The granting of virtual universal male franchise was to have important effects on the establishment and growth of the institutions of collective security, i.e., poor relief, public expenditures on works (in particular roads), etc. Unlike England, those who would look to receive relief and to public works for supplementary wages in Newfoundland were also voters. The property qualification for suffrage meant that virtually all adult males were voters as home ownership, especially in the outports, was nearly universal and the nominal value given to homes virtually meaningless, as the value was not connected to the payment of any rates or taxes. As a result of this, relief and road works—essentially another form of relief in a geography which was naturally suited to seaborne transport—were highly politicized. Questions revolving around poor relief, road works, and the appointment of poor relief and road commissioners were recurrent points of political and parliamentary debate (see Gunn, 1966, pp. 4, 53, 63-64f.).

Struggles between Council and Assembly over poor relief and the appointment of commissioners reached a crisis point in 1839-1840. In January 1840 Governor Prescott was compelled to recall the Assembly by "the pressing necessities of the utterly helpless poor" and the fact that nothing had been paid to that account since the previous April. While Prescott had misgivings, being "well aware that in no part of the world should eleemosynary aid be given with more caution then in Newfoundland," but, "the infirmities of nature and the misfortunes occasioned by the character of our occupations, are surely entitled to public commiseration and relief." (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1840a, p. 6). However, the Assembly, Council, and Governor immediately resumed their constant debates on the question of their respective privileges.

The main objection of the Colonial Office to the Assembly's demands that it have the power to appoint poor relief commissioners was that such appointments when made by a popularly elected legislature would inevitably lead to the politicization of relief and thus would become "most fertile sources of abuse and misapplication of the Public Revenue" (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1840b, p. 39). The combination of a population within which a significant portion regularly looked to relief for support and an assembly, at least partly, dependent on that population for election, clearly struck the Colonial Office as intolerable. The New Poor Law in England had only recently been enacted partly in order to separate poor relief from such political, albeit Tory, influence. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Newfoundland in 1861, in denouncing his former Liberal allies, described the system as follows "...the members [of the House of Assembly] in a great measure were chosen only as the representative-beggars of a set of paupers, and he who could get most flour was the best member." (quoted in Gunn, 1966, p. 158)

Clearly poor relief was not the only, or always the most important, political issue during this period. The question of the Roman Catholic and, to a lesser degree, Methodist role in government at Newfoundland, a transplanted Irish question, economic diversification, and the protection of fish producers legal rights (see, Little, 1984) all shaped the politics of the period. However, the question of poor relief was one of the, at least precipitating, reasons for the suspension of representative government in 1842 (Gunn, 1966) and continued thereafter to be an important political issue. In 1848 Governor LeMarchant complained to the Colonial Office that "the Local Legislature,[33] was artfully seized hold of by many of the leaders of the liberal party, and held up by them to the lower classes as a proof of the indifference of the Executive to the cries of a starving population" (quoted in Gunn, 1966, p. 116). The question of poor relief was again a central issue in 1853, and was one of the causes of the defeat of the Liberal government in 1860. Clearly there was a popularly held ethos of the proper relation between the collectivity, in the form of the state, and people. This ethos was one of the many *traditions* brought from England and Ireland and, as the development of poor relief in Newfoundland was to show, would seem to have been formed within the workings of the Old English (and Irish) Poor Law.

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[33] At this point only partly elected and, therefore, Tory dominated.

Shortly after the establishment of responsible government in 1855 and in response to rising poor relief costs the House of Assembly appointed a Select Committee to examine the problem of pauperism. The basic problem facing Newfoundland was the limits of a Newfoundland economy based entirely on the summer cod fishery and was summarized by the Acting Colonial Secretary, John Kent: "The general cause of the pauperism of this country is, that the Operative Population attempt to live for twelve months on the labour of three or four months." (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1855, p. 259)

Even in those areas where the population did have access to other resources than the summer cod fishery alone, i.e., the seal fishery, relief expenditures were high. Charles Cozens, the magistrate and former merchant at Brigus, reported to the Committee that pauperism existed "to a considerable extent" in his district (part of Harbour Main and all of Port-de-Grave) and "I suppose upwards of 2,500 persons have been relieved more or less during the last year from Government, perhaps cost the colony about £800, amongst twelve to fourteen thousand inhabitants." In fact the number of inhabitants in his district was less than his estimates, the census of 1857 would put the population of Port-de-Grave and all of Harbour Main at 11,875 (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1858). When asked to give a "description of people have been in the habit of receiving Government Relief", Cozens described them as, "Widows, orphans, fatherless children, old and infirm persons having no relatives or friends to assist them, destitute and afflicted families."

(House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1855, pp. 282-283) However, again the 1857 census shows that most of those receiving relief would have been "destitute and afflicted families" as the census lists only 115 "Crippled, aged, and disabled paupers," 62 orphans, and 296 widows (not all of whom would been on relief and many of whom would have probably also been included among the aged paupers) for Port-de-Grave and all of Harbour Main (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1858).

The system of poor relief established in the 1830s, 40s, and 50s both mirrored and yet was fundamentally different than the English Old Poor Laws on which it was based. The Old Poor Law tended to rise out of local practice and traditions rather than shape it (Marshall, 1985). The same applied in Newfoundland but, because it was provided by the Legislature which was popularly elected and sensitive to local popular pressure, relief was never given the definitive form of general legislation but rather continued to be provided on an ad hoc basis by the House of Assembly until the 1930s. While the members of the Legislature periodically bemoaned the problem of relief they never seriously attempted to reform it (Godfrey, 1985, pp. 17-19).

There were some striking similarities between the Old Poor Law and the practice of relief in Newfoundland up through the 1920s which would seem best explained by common traditions shaped and maintained by popular politics. For example, what was known as the 'Widows' Pension' was virtually identical in Old Poor Law England and pre-Commission of Government Newfoundland. The description of the 'Widows' Pension' from the English Poor Law report of 1834 is remarkably similar to that found in the report of the Newfoundland Royal Commission on Health and Public Charities from 1930.

> Relief is professed to be afforded on the ground of want of employment, or of insufficient wages; but a class of persons have, in many places, established a right to public support, independently of either of these claims. These are widows, who, in many places, receive what are called pensions, of from 1s. to 3s. a week on their own account, without any reference to their age or strength, or powers of obtaining an independent subsistence,

> but simply as widows. (Checkland & Checkland, 1974, pp. 113-14, [The Poor Law report of 1834])

> Apparently, the belief has grown up that Widows, by the very reason of their Widowhood, are entitled to what is sometimes called the 'Widow's Pay', or 'Widow's Pension'. Destitution is, of course, the only real cause for giving relief, and such destitution as will result in suffering or hardship, if the relief is not given. (Royal Commission on Health and Public Charities, 1930, p. 194)

Similarly lack of filial support, based on the belief that support of the aged should fall on the state and not on the married children of the elderly, is also decried as both a symptom and source of moral decay:

> It appears from the whole evidence, that the clause of the 43 Elizabeth which directs the parents and children of the impotent to be assessed for their support is very seldom enforced. In any ordinary state of society we much doubt the wisdom of such an enactment. The duty of supporting parents and children, in old age or infirmity, is so strongly enforced by our natural feelings that it is often well performed, even among savages, and almost always so in a nation deserving the name of civilized. We believe that England is the only European country in which it is neglected. To add the sanction of the law in countries where that of nature is found sufficient, to make that compulsory which would otherwise be voluntary, cannot be necessary; and if unnecessary, must be mischievous. But if the deficiencies of parental and filial affection are to be supplied by the parish, and the natural motives to the exercise of those virtues are thus to be withdrawn, it may be proper to endeavour to replace them, however imperfectly, by artificial stimulants, and to make fines, distress warrants, or imprisonment act as substitutes for gratitude and love. The attempt, however, is scarcely ever made. Moral debasement ... is the offspring of the present system. (Checkland & Checkland, 1974, pp. 115, 179)

> The problem of enforcing on near relatives, even, the moral and legal duty of caring for destitute members of their own families is by no means peculiar to Newfoundland. The stringent legislation in this connection, adopted by Canadian provinces and particularly the "Maintenance of Parents Act" of Ontario, shows the same issue is a live one in the Dominion of Canada and that the authorities there refuse to permit the aged and infirm, the fathers or mothers, who have fallen on evil days to become a charge on the State, when their children or other members of their families are in a position to bear the burden.
>
> The local problem is similar and just as much courage should be displayed locally in preventing unfair exploitation of public charities funds, in avoiding what really constitute frauds upon the public treasury, and in checking and eventually abolishing the disgraceful, almost inhuman practice by some children of shouldering on the Government the maintenance of parents who are thereby forced on the pauper list in the eventide of long, industrious and independent lives.

> The practice is demeaning and immoral. Its permission by the authorities demoralises those concerned. It is not a far step from avoidance of filial responsibility to neglect of other duties of citizenship. It is not surprising , then, when children who insist on pauperising parents come themselves to demand their own place on the list of paupers. The practice is one which, if not as sternly checked and punished here as elsewhere, will badly weaken the moral fibre of the people, set a premium on irresponsibility and callousness and eventually have a disastrous economic effect on the whole country. (Royal Commission on Health and Public Charities, 1930, pp. 202-203)

The most important difference between nineteenth century Newfoundland and the Old Poor Law England was political. While the English Poor Laws may have had wide scale popular support, the reason they existed was that they served the interests of the land-owners and tenant farmers (Boyer, 1990). Those receiving relief had little if any say in whether or how the Poor Laws were reformed, as they were in 1834. The wide scale franchise in Newfoundland meant that the system of public relief in Newfoundland could not be 'reformed' in the ways the English Poor Laws were in 1834 and in the 1870s and '80s (Thomson, 1984). Any Newfoundland government which attempted to tighten and limit relief in the fashion actually accomplished in Great Britain would have lost the popular support required to stay in power. While governments might recommend limits on relief they seem never to have been able to actually implement such limits. The sort of 'reform' which took place in England between 1830 and 1900, and which saw the value of public support of the aged slashed, both in absolute and the relative terms, and the conditions under which support could be obtained, tightened, and made more unpleasant (Thomson, 1984), could not be implemented in Newfoundland until the suspension of representative government in 1935.

B. The Newfoundland Old Age Pension

Up until 1911 there were no measures for the support specifically of the aged. Instead, the aged were covered either as widows or as "Crippled, aged, and disabled paupers" under provision for the permanent poor. The Newfoundland Old Age Pension, discussed in more detail in the previous chapter, was passed in 1911, almost twenty years before Canada was to do the same, as support to complement the 'Widows' Pension', providing similar support to married couples and aged men 75 year of age and older. Despite being promoted as a modern welfare measure, (House of Assembly of Newfoundland, 1911, p. 448; McGrath, 1911) the Newfoundland Old Age Pension was in many respects very similar to the old 'Widows' Pension', both having no explicit needs criteria and being assigned to electoral districts on the basis of population rather than assessed needs.

V. Conclusion

Newfoundland society was founded on the cod fishery. The cod fishery, in turn, was a component of an expanding, essentially capitalist, North Atlantic economy. Newfoundland itself was seen as a 'great ship' and in turn Newfoundland and Brigus society through the eighteenth century was an extension of shipboard society. An important aspect of this for the aged was that early Newfoundland society, while it might be a place of year-round residence and be so for many years, was almost never a place of life-long residence. Like a ship, Newfoundland was less a 'settled' society than it was a workplace, a place from which one returned if possible at the end of the voyage, when in distress, or towards the end of life.

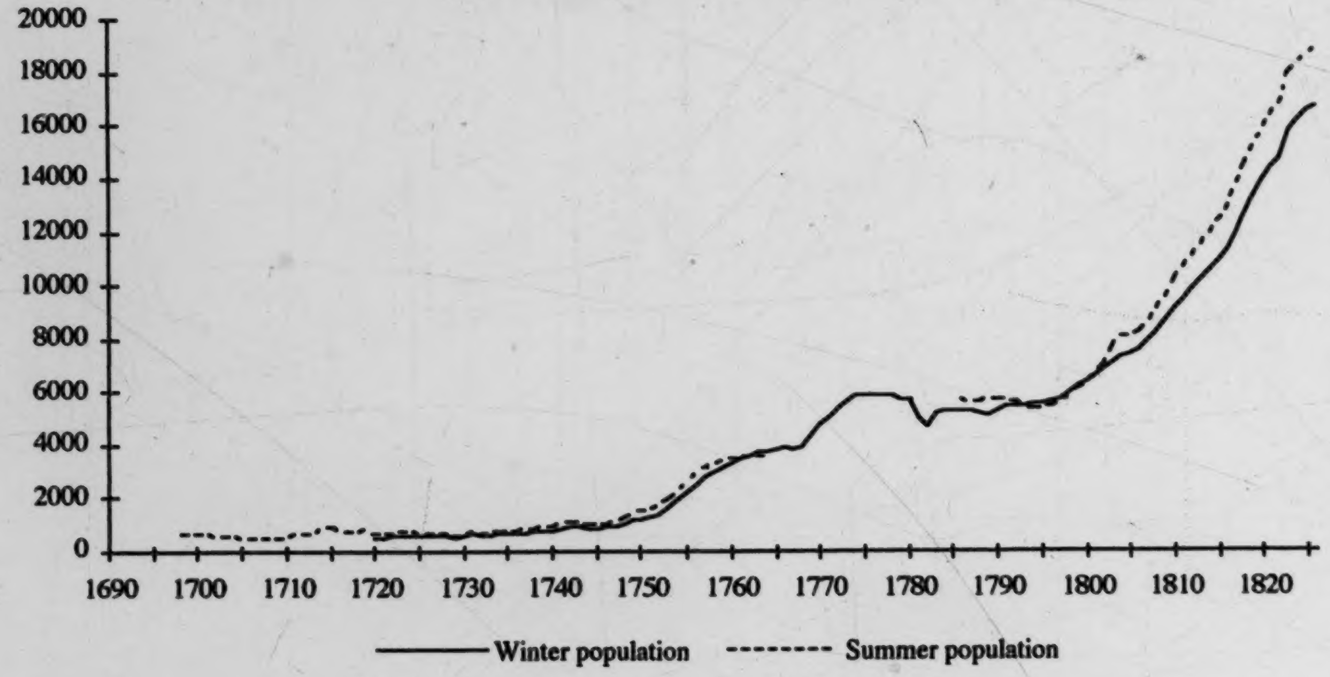
As a result Newfoundland's institutions of settled society, in particular public support of "the Sick and the Lame; even the Blind and Aged" (Thomas, 1968, p. 171), developed differently than in Britain's other North American colonies. It was not that Newfoundland society lacked such institutions, as in England and Ireland those in Newfoundland could look to their parish for support, but for those in Newfoundland their 'home parish' (defined as such by the Old Poor Law) was in England or Ireland even when they and their parents had been born in Newfoundland. This remained the case right through the end of the eighteenth century, when Newfoundland was "still nothing but a great ship" (Reeves, 1793b, p. 171).

With the rapid expansion of the spring seal fishery at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Newfoundland rather suddenly developed into a truly 'settled society'. The basic class structure of Brigus and most of Conception Bay, at least, was that of merchants/planters and fishing servants with the relations of production being essentially capitalistic. This mode of production remained the dominant one through the period of this study.

The society which developed in the first part of the nineteenth century, in particular the working class, brought with it, popular traditions on the responsibility of the collectivity, embodied in the state, to those in need in society such as the aged. These popular traditions were to a great measure a reflection of the English Old Poor Law. However, the constitution granted Newfoundland in 1832, with a popularly elected government and virtually complete male suffrage, was very different from the limited landed aristocratic democracy within which the English Old Poor Law had developed.

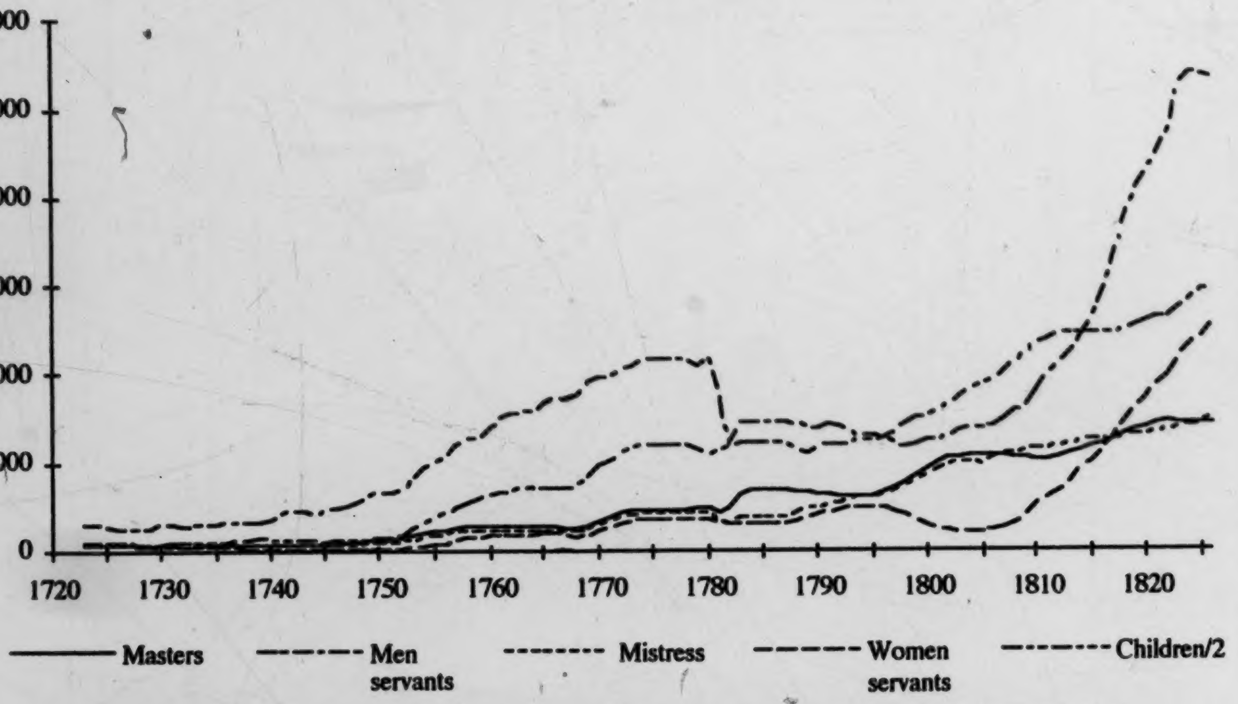
As a result of this by the 1920s there existed a system of public support for the elderly which, like the Old Poor Law on which it was based, operated on the basis of a muddle of local practice and traditions. It was never given definitive legislative form. It was dispensed and coordinated via political patronage which was, because the patronage came through the popularly elected Legislature, sensitive to local popular pressure.

Figure 4.1: Summer and winter population, Conception Bay, 1698-1826.



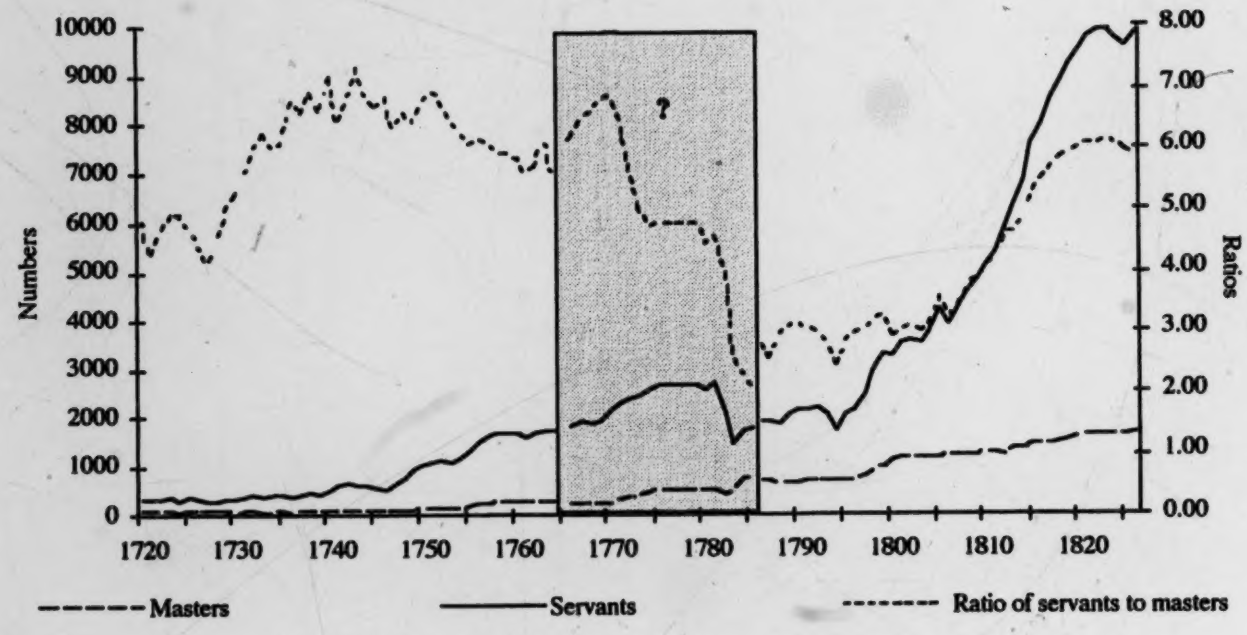
Running ten year average. Figures used to construct figure are from Lewis (1988, pp. 189-194).

Figure 4.2: Winter population by population group, 1720-1826.



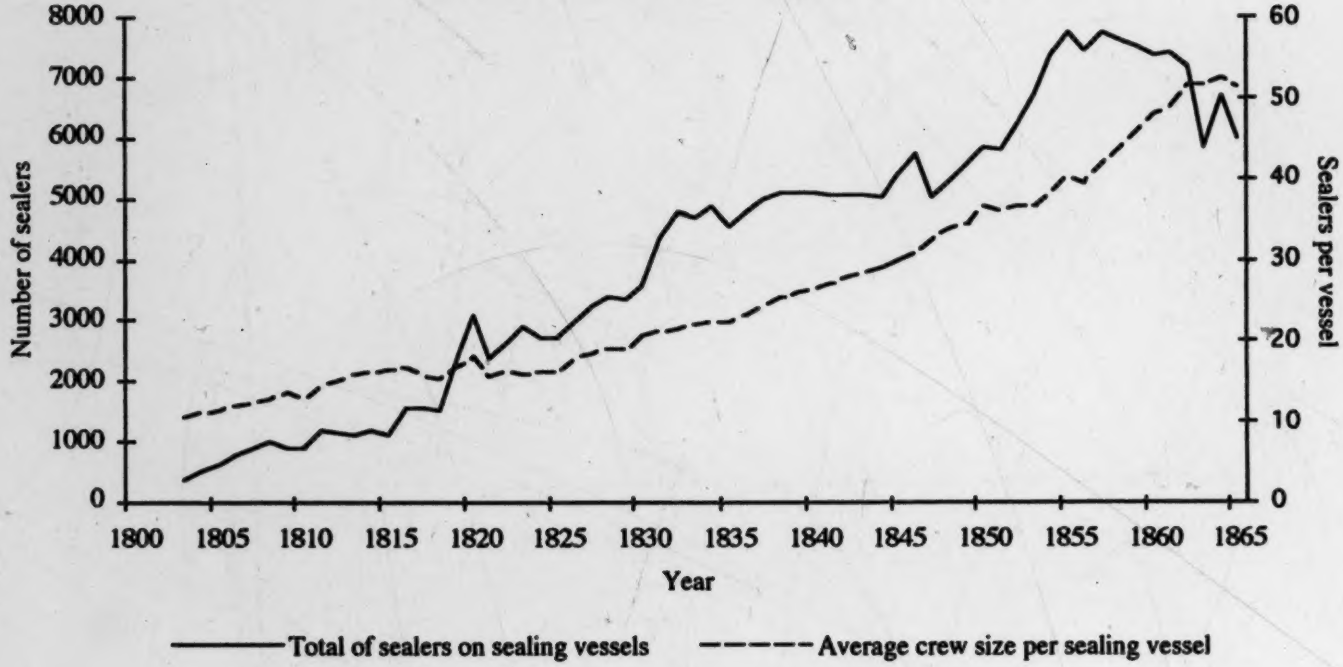
Ten year running average. Figures used to construct figure are from Lewis (1988, pp. 192-194). Children were not consistantly enumerated by sex, therefore, in order to make comparison with the other groups which were, the number of children is halved, representing the number of either and both boys and girls.

Figure 4.3: Masters, servants, and ratios, Conception Bay, summers, 1723-1826.



Shaded area missing, estimated from winter population.

Figure 4.4: Numbers of sealers and average crew size on sealing vessels, Conception Bay, 1800-1865.



Figures compiled from Lewis (1988) and Ryan (1994).

Figure 4.5: Growth in sealing and Labrador fleets, Conception Bay, 1800-1865.

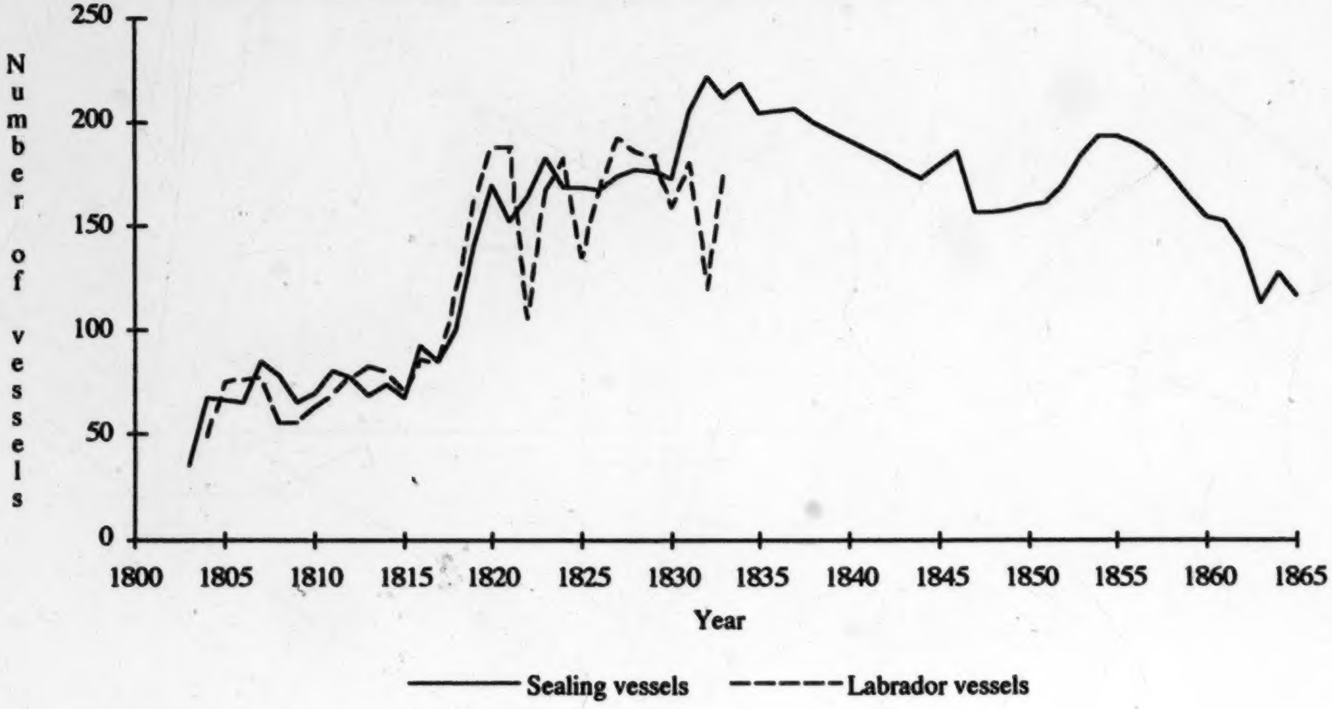
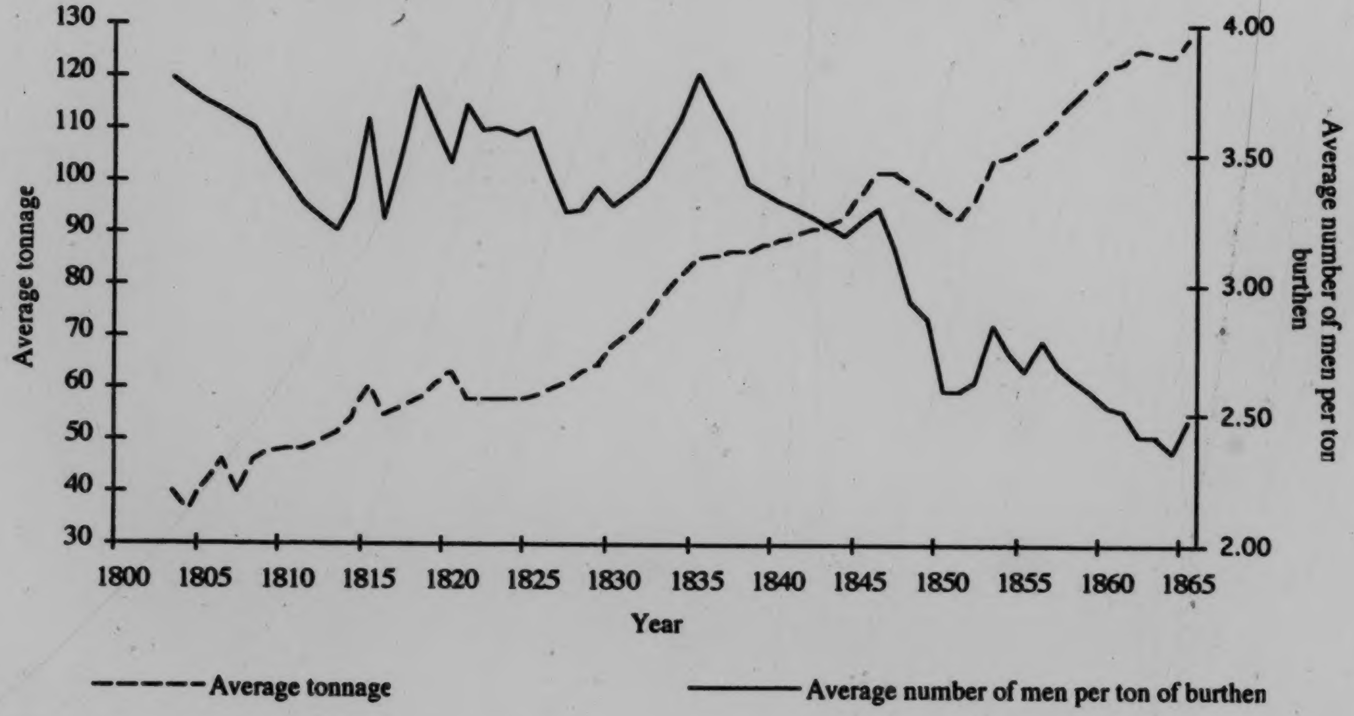


Figure 4.6: Vessel size and crewmen to vessel size, Conception Bay, 1800-1865.



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The subject of this research has been a social historical study of the primarily socio-economic condition of the elderly in a medium-sized Newfoundland community. The period of the study, pre-1949, has most often been characterized, within the dominant modernization paradigm in Newfoundland studies, as a 'traditional', pre-industrial period. As such it would appear to be a good test case of the sort of society which GMT posits as existing before the impacts of modernization—urbanization, industrialization, and the welfare state. The research also serves as a test of the main opposing theory to GMT, originally made by Laslett (1972) that at least in some areas of north-west Europe the nuclear family and neolocal 'norms' of residence predominated and that this was linked to the existence of collective institutions for the life-long security of individuals.

A significant portion of the Newfoundland population originated from England, one of those areas dominated by nuclear family structures and neolocal 'norms' of residence. However, the other main area from which most Newfoundlanders originated, Ireland, has been characterized as being dominated by the sort of complex family forms characteristic of GMT's *traditional* society (Kertzer, 1991, p. 160). To a great extent, whether either source area of immigration to Newfoundland was more influential in forming *traditional* Newfoundland society is, according to Sider (1986), S. Antler (1975), Faris (1982), and others, irrelevant as *traditional* Newfoundland society was largely a creation of nineteenth century merchant capitalism.

There have been increasing numbers of detailed studies of pre-industrial or 'traditional' families in small to medium sized communities throughout Europe and North America, accompanied by continuing debates around what was the nature and composition of such 'traditional' and pre-industrial households. Accompanying this has been a growing number of studies examining "the changing experiences of families in communities undergoing industrialization or urbanization" (Morgan, 1985, p. 167). However, there have been few studies which have attempted to link the household composition and the condition of the aged to political-economic structures and their historical origins as has been attempted in this study. Furthermore, due to the nature of the data—parish records, aggregate statistics on households, or unconnected nominal censuses—researchers have either been constrained to examine households and individuals at only one point in time or they have been confined to dealing with changes over time of macro conditions such as average household size while being unable to look at how individual households change over time. As a result of this, approaches to histories of the family utilizing census records, such as Laslett's work, have been criticized for being temporally isolated snapshots which tend to obscure, what is argued to be, the true importance of the extended family in pre- and early industrial societies (Berkner, 1975). One of the strengths of the present study—which attempts to address that criticism—is the use of census records which allow individuals and, though with certain limitations, households to be linked across censuses and over a considerable period of time and allow one to apply oral and written historical sources so as to enrich and elaborate what is found in the census data. The use of linkages between censuses allows one to follow individuals over a 35 year period, a significant portion of their lives.

The structures of the households studied were not static and the individuals making up those households existed in differing relationships to the rest of their households over their life-spans. Most often individuals ended up living in more than one type of family over their life-span. Particular households' structures changed over the study period while others remained stable. This is not surprising given that social and economic conditions change for families, including older families, and as Laslett (1995) indicated, families are able to respond in a variety of ways to these situations. Morgan (1985) also makes this point, "Even families with relatively limited resources (or families that have been dealt a relatively bad hand, demographically speaking) have a variety of strategies open to them in coming to terms with unfavourable, novel or threatening environments" (p. 175). The very limited income sources of both many of the households containing elderly individuals as well as of the households of those with elderly relatives living elsewhere in the community meant that the elderly and their families employed a number of such strategies.

Historical documents on the state's response to the elderly and those in need provided an important context to the present study. They give a background for interpreting possible responses of the elderly to their situation. A detailed historical study underlies the importance of peculiar developments of the state and its ability to sustain an 'aged' population.

The Newfoundland fishery and the Old Poor Law both arose as part of the process of and in response to the dispossession of small property holders and the creation of the 'seething mobility' of vagabonds and workers who came to form the maritime working class. To a great extent the policies of the British government, the stated desires of the West Country Adventurers, and the choices of the fishing servants were directed towards ensuring that society's dependent and those institutions of 'settled' society which supported the dependent in seventeenth and eighteenth century England and Ireland—public and private charity—remained features of those home societies and not of Newfoundland. The low number of aged persons in Newfoundland, even after almost 200 years of 'settlement' was almost certainly one result of this.

The best evidence we have, though it is limited, suggests that before the nineteenth century the majority of the 'dependent' elderly, even those born at Newfoundland, looked to return to Britain. Newfoundland residents came from a cultural background within which support of the dependent (including the aged) portion of the population came from the collectivity, the sort of collectivity which did not exist at Newfoundland. The society the aged and others in need returned to was that of the England of the old Poor Laws, a society within which community responsibility for the elderly was the norm as it had been for, at least, several centuries (Thomson, 1991, p. 196).

Newfoundland was granted representative government in 1832. It came about due to the rapid rise in the year-round population which occurred in the first decade of the nineteenth century. This year-round population became a more or less permanent population due to the rise of the seal fishery which provided winter work, or at least work that could not be carried out by migratory fishing servants. In turn the growth in the permanent population lead to the granting of local government.

Local government allowed for the establishment of the institutions of settled society. The constitution which Newfoundland received from the Colonial Office, to a great degree by mistake, granted virtual universal male suffrage. With such suffrage the politically active working class, especially around Conception Bay and St. John's, took a direct role in the political process, both at the ballot box and on the streets. To the distress of patrician observers from Lord Durham (1963) in 1839 to Lord Amulree in 1933 (Newfoundland Royal Commission, 1933), the Newfoundland political system was far too direct a democracy with what they saw as the antithesis of "enlightened government":

> The simple-minded electorate were visited every few years by rival politicians, who, in the desire to secure election, were accustomed to make the wildest promises involving increased public expenditure in the constituency and the satisfaction of all the cherished desires of the inhabitants.... There is no leisured class, and the great majority of the people are quite unfitted to play a part in public life. (Newfoundland Royal Commission, 1933, pp. 82, 86)

The debates which followed the first elections in the 1830s in the Newfoundland House of Assembly are evidence that the great majority of the people had shared and strongly held beliefs about the relation between the state and the needy, in particular, a belief in the responsibility of the collectivity, in the form of the government, for society's dependent, especially for the aged and for widows. After the representativeness of the legislature was limited in 1842, reformers would use "the indifference of the Executive to the cries of a starving population" (quoted in Gunn, 1966, p. 116) as a central aspect in their fight for responsible, and representative, government.

Public support of the aged, widows, the infirm, etc. was a 'traditional' institution which arose in Newfoundland out of Newfoundland society's origins in those areas where the collectivity, rather than the extended family, was the ultimate guarantor of individual support of the needy. Public support of the aged was reinforced in Newfoundland because most Newfoundlanders, at least around Conception Bay, were not the 'self-sufficient' agriculturalists of much of the rest of North America but rather were workers employed producing a commodity within an essentially capitalistic North Atlantic economy and they continued as such throughout the period of this study. While many, probably most, households supplemented their incomes with subsistence production the vast majority were absolutely dependent on the production of one (dried cod) or more (seal oil) maritime commodities, the success of which were generally uncertain.

The examination of the historical evidence as found in government records, and careful reconstruction of households over the period 1921-1945 through the use of the nominal censuses and confirmed through oral history with informants who lived in the community at the time of the study period, served as the basis of a portrait of the elderly in Brigus in the period from 1920 to 1949. The portrait drawn is quite different from the traditional Newfoundland society said to have been in existence for "nearly a half-millennium," to have been "shaped by centuries of isolated community life," and to be centred on the "patrilocal and patricentric extended family" (Queen & Habenstein, 1974, pp. 395, 382-383). Instead is a community much closer to the society from which it originated historically, i.e., the north west European societies, England in particular, founded on the predominance of the nuclear family as the basic domestic group and with collective institutions a central part of the system of social security for the individual.

'Traditional' society and community has been said to be based on the extended, three-generation or four-generation family, within which production and reproduction, including care of the elderly, took place. The picture of Brigus drawn here is much more like that of nineteenth century industrial towns (e.g., Quadagno, 1982) or modern communities with the families of the aged being essentially and, it would seem preferably, one- or two-generational and not being economically self-sufficient units, though those households were probably more 'malleable' than presently. Much of that 'malleability' was based on shared poverty, at both ends of the life-span. Some aged individuals, especially widows, lacking the financial resources to remain living on their own, went outside of familial relationships when those were not available or suitable, and, at the other end of the life span, young families unable to afford their own separate household or young 'girls' whose families' poverty encouraged to go into domestic service.

The strongest finding of this research coming from the census records is that there is little if any evidence of the sort of extended family, functioning as the site of consumption and production, proposed by the proponents of GMT. The extended family was not the household situation of any significant number of aged individuals in the community, nor would it have seemed to be a popular strategy. Where the elderly did live in extended family households, the economic basis of those households was virtually never shared productive activity. Instead the basis of most three and four-generation households was very similar to what (Kertzer, 1995, p. 377) has labelled the "nuclear reincorporation household system" and characterized as typical of England along with other areas of north-west Europe. The essence of this system was that neolocally formed nuclear families would take in dependent parents—most often widowed mothers—in their late old age. Those three- or four-generational households which existed in Brigus were most often based on shared poverty and the need to pool resources in order to survive.

While independent residence may have been the preferred option, many elderly did live with children and grandchildren, at least at some period of their later lives and especially among the working class of Brigus. The basis of this residence varied: some households, similar to that described by Quadagno (1982) for a nineteenth century English industrial community, were created by family crises of widowhood, separation, or illegitimacy when children and grandchildren returned to parents' households. Others involved widowed individuals, usually widows, moving back in with married children on the death of their spouse. Yet others were a result of migratory labour with elderly householders taking in the families of sons-in-laws or, more commonly, sons who was working away from the community. At least a few were composed of elderly individuals caring for adult children who were incapable of forming their own households due to mental or physical disabilities. Finally, the most common form of multi-generational residence for the aged, as for those under 65 years of age, was parents living with their still unmarried, and often quite young, children.

As with England and Wales from preindustrial times through to the present (Wall, 1995, p. 103), there is no evidence that there were any explicitly stated norms concerning the desirability of coresidence of the aged and their adult children. The indication that those elderly individuals who possessed greater economic resources were more likely than were those less well off to live on their own suggests that neolocal residence and independence were the functioning ideal.

The major difference between the working class households of Brigus and, for example, of mid-nineteenth century England was the existence of nearly universal home ownership in Brigus. This was combined with the highly politicized nature of relief and pensions in Newfoundland and, by the 1920s, virtually universal suffrage—when women's votes were added to the already virtual universal male suffrage. This probably meant that inheritance of the home, which sometimes included subsistence agricultural property, became an important factor in residence decisions. Evidence for this is found in the fact that aged individuals, especially those not listed as the head of their household, were far more likely to reside with a son, the normal inheritor of the house, than with a daughter, by a factor of at least five to one. In comparison in one county in Ontario examined by Struthers (1992) in the 1930s, two-thirds of the elderly living with children were living with daughters. Widespread political support for public support of the aged, one aspect of which was that such support was practically never means tested, probably also meant that the aged, via their 'Widows' or Old Age Pension, could make a financial contribution to the household and which in turn may have encouraged multi-generational coresidence—as Anderson (1977) and others (Quadagno, 1982) found for nineteenth century Britain—rather than discouraging it as has often been assumed.

By 1920-1945 Brigus exhibited few of the other traits which have been claimed to characterized 'traditional' communities. The age structure of the community most resembled modern North American societies, with a relatively high proportion of aged. On average households headed by elderly individuals were substantially smaller than those headed by younger individuals, while if the extended family was the main form of support for the elderly one would expect to find the opposite. A significant number of elderly individuals were living on their own or with their spouse only, even when they had children and other relatives living in the community. Very few collateral relatives lived with extended kin, most unmarried aged individuals lived alone or with other single or widowed siblings.

The history of the Newfoundland state in the period from 1920 to 1949 presents some interesting foreshadowings of the situation of the modern Western state. Like many modern states, Newfoundland had developed a system of support of the needy by the collectivity which was forged and maintained within the context of an essentially popular democracy. The system was clearly 'irrational', in many respects inefficient, and, while in any absolute sense the support given the needy was limited, it was a system which no popularly elected government, or at least one lacking the tools of the modern media, could 'reform' in the way the English Poor Laws had been reformed in the 1830s and in the 1870s and 1880s. The 'reform' of the system had to await the suspension of democracy brought on by the Newfoundland state's inability to meet its obligations to international financial institutions. In this light, perhaps the appeal of the increased social transfers promised in Joseph Smallwood's Confederation campaign was as much a return to Newfoundland 'traditions' as it was to the lure of 'modernization'.

In fact public support of the needy, a significant proportion of whom were the aged, was a normal part of life for many Newfoundlanders and had been, albeit in differing forms, from the origins of Newfoundland settlement. Herbert L. Pottle, who served in the Commission of Government and in the post-Confederation Smallwood administration and who became a strong critic of Smallwood, recognized that what Confederation offered many Newfoundlanders was not different in kind from what they had 'traditionally' looked to the government for but rather different in scale: "What he [Smallwood] did was to take control of a dependent society that had always asked much of government and ordered it to ask for more." (Pottle, 1979, p. 166)

Throughout the history of Brigus and Newfoundland, as today, the relationship between public policies, such as old age pensions, and the economic, household, and family situation of the elderly "remains something of a mystery since the filters which form a crucial part of the process are not clearly visible and their functions are less than transparent." (McDaniel, 1993, p. 137) However, it seems clear that not only was the situation of the aged a result of political and economic forces, but the aged, either directly or indirectly, had an effect on both those economic and political structures.

It has been widely accepted that "old-age pensions and family allowances were especially attractive to the Newfoundland people" (Rowe, 1980, p. 512) in 1949 and that they formed one of the strongest arguments for those supporting Confederation with Canada. Yet, if government support of the needy was as foreign to Newfoundland society as some have argued (Makin, 1994; i.e., modernization theory as the local "informal existent dogmatic theory", Laslett, 1976), then it is hard to understand why the promises of increased government supports by the supporters of Confederation would have been as effective as they were. In fact, as has been argued here, collective support for the aged, along with support for other groups, was neither foreign to pre-Confederation Newfoundlanders nor was it a peripheral and minor issue. Instead collective support for the "Sick and the Lame; even the Blind and Aged" (Thomas, 1968, p. 172) was a central issue for Newfoundland society and the state from the origins of that society.

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APPENDIX A: Example of Data File From Nominal Census

	ID	PAGE	LINE	DWEL	FAM	COMMUNIT	SEX	REL_TO_H
1	1259	38	1	961	279	Brigus	Male	Head
2	1260	38	2	961	279	Brigus	Female	Wife
3	1261	38	3	961	279	Brigus	Female	Daughter
4	1262	38	4	961	279	Brigus	Male	Son
5	1263	38	5	961	279	Brigus	Male	Son
6	1264	38	6	961	279	Brigus	Male	Son
7	1265	38	7	262	280	Brigus	Male	Head
8	1266	38	8	262	280	Brigus	Female	Wife
9	1267	38	9	262	281	Brigus	Male	Head
10	1268	38	10	262	281	Brigus	Female	Wife
11	1269	38	11	262	281	Brigus	Male	Son
12	1270	38	12	263	282	Brigus	Male	Head
13	1271	38	13	263	282	Brigus	Female	Wife
14	1272	38	14	263	282	Brigus	Male	Grandson
15	1273	38	15	264	283	Brigus	Male	Head
16	1274	38	16	264	283	Brigus	Female	Wife
17	1275	38	17	264	283	Brigus	Male	Son
18	1276	38	18	264	283	Brigus	Male	Son
19	1277	38	19	264	283	Brigus	Female	Daughter
20	1278	38	20	265	284	Brigus	Male	Head
21	1279	38	21	265	284	Brigus	Female	Wife
22	1280	38	22	265	284	Brigus	Female	Daughter
23	1281	38	23	265	284	Brigus	Female	Daughter
24	1282	38	24	265	284	Brigus	Female	Daughter
25	1283	38	25	265	284	Brigus	Female	Daughter
26	1284	38	26	265	284	Brigus	Male	Son
27	1285	38	27	266	285	Brigus	Male	Head
28	1286	38	28	266	285	Brigus	Female	Wife
29	1287	38	29	266	286	Brigus	Male	Head
30	1288	38	30	266	286	Brigus	Female	Wife
31	1289	38	31	266	286	Brigus	Male	Son
32	1290	38	32	266	286	Brigus	Male	Son
33	1291	38	33	266	286	Brigus	Female	Domestic

MAR_STAT	YEARBORN	MON_BORN	AGE	BIRTHPLA	YEAR_IMM
Married	1888	July	33	Brigus	
Married	1890	August	31	Northern Bay	
Single	1915	January	6	Brigus	
Single	1916	April	5	Brigus	
Single	1918	June	3	Brigus	
Single	1921	March	0.3	Brigus	
Married	1855	November	65	Brigus	
Married	1860	December	60	Brigus	
Married	1884	January	37	Brigus	
Married	1885	May	36	Brigus	
Single	1920	November	0.8	Brigus	
Married	1842	July	79	Brigus	
Married	1842	July	79	Brigus	
Single	1902	February	19	Brigus	
Married	1873	August	48	Brigus	
Married	1873	October	47	Brigus	
Single	1902	June	19	Brigus	
Single	1904	May	17	Brigus	
Single	1907	May	14	Brigus	
Married	1868	June	53	Brigus	
Married	1873	August	48	Brigus	
Single	1908	September	12	Brigus	
Single	1911	May	10	Brigus	
Single	1911	May	10	Brigus	
Single	1914	April	7	Brigus	
Single	1916	June	5	Brigus	
Married	1851	March	70	St. John's	
Married	1858	August	63	Brigus	
Married	1894	March	27	Brigus	
Married	1894	May	27	Brigus	
Single	1918	August	3	Brigus	
Single	1919	March	2	Brigus	
Single	1907	October	13	North River	

RELIGION	OCCUPATI	INDUSTRY
Roman Catholic	Carpenter	
Roman Catholic		
Roman Catholic		
Roman Catholic		
Roman Catholic		
Roman Catholic		
Church of England	Mailman	H.M.S. or Government
Church of England		
Church of England	Engineer	Unemployed
Church of England		
Church of England		
Roman Catholic	Carman	
Roman Catholic		
Roman Catholic	Paper Maker	Grand Falls
Church of England	Mill Man	Saw Mill
Church of England		
Church of England	Mill Man	
Church of England	Mill Man	
Church of England	At school	
Roman Catholic	Farmer	
Roman Catholic		
Roman Catholic	At school	
Roman Catholic	At school	
Roman Catholic	At school	
Roman Catholic	At school	
Roman Catholic		
Roman Catholic		
Roman Catholic		
Roman Catholic	Station Agent	Reid Newfoundland Co.
Roman Catholic		
Roman Catholic		
Roman Catholic		
Church of England	Domestic (listed in REL_TO_H)	

WORKSTAT	OTHER_OC	HYPO_REL	NAME
Employee		Head	Mark Fardy
		Wife	Mary Fardy
		Daughter	Margaret Fardy
		Son	Dominic Fardy
		Son	James Fardy
		Son	John Fardy
Employee		Head	George Butland
		Wife	Matilda Butland
Employee		Son-in-law	George Duncan
		Daughter	Louisa P. Duncan
		Grandson	Gerald Duncan
On own account		Head	James Quigley
		Wife	Jane Quigley
Employee		Grandson	John Quigley
Employer		Head	Thomas Noseworthy
		Wife	Amelia Noseworthy
Employee		Son	George Edw. Noseworthy
Employee		Son	Stephen Noseworthy
		Daughter	Mary Noseworthy
On own account	Carman	Head	Edward Shea
		Wife	Elizabeth Shea
		Daughter	Mazie Shea
		Daughter	Mildred Shea
		Daughter	Gertrude Shea
		Daughter	Ellen Shea
		Son	Edward Shea
		Head	Charles Power
		Wife	Bridget Power
Employee		Son	Charles J. Power
		Daughter-in-law	Margaret Power
		Grandson	Robert Power
		Grandson	Charles Power
		Domestic	Sarah McCave

APPENDIX B: Consent form for interviews

The research I am doing is about how the elderly lived in Brigus, Newfoundland from after the First World War to just before Confederation. I am interested in such questions as with whom the elderly lived, how the elderly got by (e.g., economically), what sort of work did the elderly do, what other things were the elderly involved in (e.g., church, politics, social groups, *etc.*), and other things about the daily lives of people.

When I write my thesis, or any books or articles, I will not keep the name of the community secret. Anyone with knowledge of Newfoundland will know which community was studied even if I gave Brigus a pseudonym. When I write up the research I will not reveal the names of individuals or specific families, though many people will obviously be easily identified by anyone who knows Brigus. I am interested in the everyday life of people and I am not looking for sensational material or 'dirt' on individuals.

Would you allow me to:

1) Ask you some questions about what you remember about Brigus in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s?

Yes ____ No ____

2) Tape-record this interview for my personal use so that it is easier for me to remember what you said later?

Yes ____ No ____

3) Donate a copy of the tape to the Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive?

Yes ____ No ____

4) If the tape is donated to the Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive would you allow it to be listened to and quoted by qualified researchers:

At any time and without your permission being required?

Yes ____ No ____

After ______ years only?

Yes ____ No ____

After some event only?

Specific event (e.g., someone has died)

Yes ____ No ____

With your written permission only, for as long as you are living (after which it shall be available to qualified researchers)?

Yes ____ No ____

5) Donate a copy of the tape to the Brigus Historical Society?

Yes ____ No ____

6) In any books, papers, or articles I do, do you wish to be listed as having given that interview (e.g., I would repeat what you said and then list it as coming from an interview with you, if not it would only be identified as coming from interview number something)?

Yes ____ No ____

7) In my thesis or any books, papers, or articles I do, do you wish to be listed in the preface (e.g., "I would like to thank whomever for helping me .... *etc.*")?

Yes ____ No ____

If in the future you change your mind about any of this you can contact me at 753 5740 or through the Memorial University Folklore and Language Archives (737 8401) and the permission you gave will be changed.

Robert M. Lewis, MA (MUN)
Department of Sociology
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2H4
(403) 492 5234

17 William Street
St. John's, Newfoundland
A1C 2S2
753 5740

Signature ____

APPENDIX C

THE MEANING OF THE TERM 'SERVANT' IN NINETEENTH CENTURY NEWFOUNDLAND

The meaning of the term servant has become of central importance in recent works on the relations of production in nineteenth century Newfoundland, in particular in the arguments of Cadigan (1995, pp. 26-27). Cadigan bases his model of the relations of production in nineteenth century Newfoundland almost entirely on the meaning of the term 'servant' as used in the listing of "Heads of Families who are Servants" taken on the first census taken by the Newfoundland Government, in 1836. All of Cadigan's subsequent arguments for the existence and dominance of the 'family fishery' depend on that particular return from the 1836 census. As the evidentiary foundation for a mode of production, it is a shaky one. Cadigan argues that the small recorded number of "Heads of Families who are Servants" in the 1836 Newfoundland census indicates that "almost no households on the northeast coast survived by wage labour." (Cadigan, 1995, p. 26)

The problem with this argument revolves around the meaning of the term *servant*. The term servant had a multiplicity of overlapping meanings during the first part of the nineteenth century. In England the most commonly understood meaning of servant at the time, "all those who worked for one master, and were maintained by that master [i.e., the head of the household]" (Kussmaul, 1981, p. 5), would have rendered the question on the 1836 Newfoundland census an oxymoron, servants were by definition those living in someone else's (their masters') household and were, therefore, not the heads.

A second definition of the word servant, and an older one, extended the meaning to include all those who worked for others comprising both servants, in the previous sense and labourers. The term 'Labourers', as opposed to 'servant', only became the general term for wage workers in the nineteenth century in England. As Kussmaul points out, "The two synchronous meanings can be confusing," (1981, p. 6), confusing enough that the British census of 1851, confounded the two senses of the term and hence, "confused enumerators and enumerated alike." (Kussmaul, 1981, p. 7). Finally the modern sense of servants, i.e., domestic workers residing within the household of the employer, also started to come into prominence in this period.

The term *servant* in Newfoundland also had a multiplicity of overlapping meanings, as well as its own separate history. Originally in Newfoundland, i.e., in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century the term servant, in relation to the *inhabitant,* as opposed to *migratory* fishery, referred to something of a hybrid of the first two senses of the term outlined above. Semi-permanent 'masters', 'housekeepers', or 'planters' (the main, virtually synonymous, terms used), hired migratory 'men servants', paid in either set wage or on a piece-work basis (shares) to catch fish for them at Newfoundland, they also hired 'women servants' (in much smaller numbers) probably to assist their wives (listed as 'mistresses', though a few 'mistresses' may have run their own fishing operations). These servants did not head their own households at Newfoundland but rather resided with the planter's family or at least on the planter's property. Newfoundland was not the permanent home for these servants, as they did not establish homes there and did not need to, as part of their labour contract was room and board provided by their employers (as was provided for the migratory fishery labourers during the same period). While fishing servants may have had some similarities with agricultural servants in husbandry, they were in fact much more like (and in fact often were) seaman. Being an agricultural servant in husbandry essentially precluded being married and absolutely precluded establishing ones own household. While seaman clearly did not establish independent households aboard ship, they most often did do so in their home communities, and to which they returned to at intervals or when unable to work. The situation of fishing servants at Newfoundland (whether employed by inhabitant or migratory fishing masters) was far more similar to seamen than it was to agricultural servants.

While our knowledge of the lives of fishing servants at Newfoundland is limited, it is clear that they saw England or Ireland as their home (as did many of their masters, *inhabitant* or not). The distinction found in, at least rural, England between servant as workers hired for the year and living with their master and labourers as workers hired for a shorter period of time and resident elsewhere, generally their own households, simply did not apply to Newfoundland to any significant extent before the nineteenth century. All *servants* were hired for at least one season (the *season* being from about May to November) and resided with their masters while at Newfoundland. Until there was a significant amount of winter work and a truly resident working class there would be no section of the working class who were the equivalent of day-labourers, in the sense of having a household separate of their masters', as there was in rural England (and as, of course, today).

While the balance between the inhabitant and migratory fisheries changed fundamentally during the course of the eighteenth century, the relations of production and the household structure within the inhabitant fishery did not. As long as Newfoundland could not provide the majority of summer fishing servants with winter work or public relief, servants remained essentially migratory.

This situation did not change until the very end of the eighteenth century when the offshore seal fishery came to supply winter work (Ryan, 1994). The Board of Trade continued to record the population under the same categories as they had used since the 1670s up through 1830, even though after the turn of the eighteenth century the basic assumptions about the relationship between employment status come class and household or family structures no longer held. With the establishment of a truly permanent working class there was at least the possibility that working class households would be established (and other than Cadigan, most have argued that such was fairly common, at least in the first half of the nineteenth century and around Conception Bay).

By the fourth decade of the nineteenth century *servant* had come to take on a local usage clearly distinct from that in England, however, as a significant proportion of the population, especially among the elites, continued to come from England and Ireland, it is often unclear whether servant is being used in the ambiguous English sense or in the equally ambiguous, though different, local Newfoundland sense. There were two overlapping meanings for the term *servant* in nineteenth century Newfoundland:

1) anyone working for another, whether for set wages or shares.
2) only those working for others on set wages.

The modern sense of the term servant, i.e., those engaged in domestic service and residing with their employers, does not seem to have been common until the twentieth century.

In the 1836 Newfoundland census it is not clear from the published returns (and the nominal or manuscript census no longer exists) which sense of the term servant was intended by the House of Assembly when the census was planned nor how the enumerators interpreted the questions concerning servants. It is possible that either group could have interpreted the term in the three common English senses or in the two most common Newfoundland ones. However, it seems quite clear that there was a great deal of confusion over the term. The question was never asked again (at least in anything like that form) on a Newfoundland census. Cadigan's statement that "In the 1836 census almost no household heads were listed as servants in Conception Bay" (Cadigan, 1995, p. 26) understates what the census gives, in fact under the heading of "Heads of Families who are Servants" there is a complete blank. If the census is to be believed there was not one household in Conception Bay headed by a servant. The distinct possibility exists that the blank column represents missing data rather than zero values, and the question was left blank as meaningless or contradictory by the enumerators.[1]

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[1] Censuses from this period virtually never distinguish between missing values and those where the actual value was zero.

Evidence that the question was confusing to the census takers is to be found in the returns from the district of Ferryland. In that district, one not known for being the centre of a planter fishery, there were 749 persons listed as "Heads of Families who are Servants", out of a total population of 1,989 living in only 679 households. The complete absence of any listing of "Heads of Families who are Servants" in Conception Bay, a district where other evidence indicates there were such, and a superfluity of such in Ferryland, a district not particularly noted for its planter fishery, makes it clear that the census heading of "Heads of Families who are Servants" can not be used as a measure of the degree to which capitalists relations of production marked the economy.